



A report issued by the Illinois Coalition
for Immigrant and Refugee Rights



For the Benefit of All

Strategic Recommendations to Enhance the State's
Role in the Integration of Immigrants in Illinois

Report of the New Americans Policy Council, Year One
Issues of Citizenship, Education, Human Services and Health Care



December 2006

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and Health Care

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December 2006



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ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR



December 5, 2006

In November 2005, I signed a landmark New Americans Executive Order to help hard working immigrants successfully integrate into the American and Illinois way of life. The executive order called for a coherent, strategic, and proactive approach from state government and community organizations, working together to integrate the rapidly growing immigrant population in Illinois.

The Executive Order established an Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy, to coordinate the work of an external Policy Council, and a statewide Interagency Task Force. The New Americans Policy Council is comprised of business, faith, labor, community, philanthropic, and governmental leaders who have worked tirelessly to develop a new approach to immigrant integration, including issues such as citizenship, learning English, improving education, expanding healthcare, and accessing human services.

Along with the Interagency Task Force, the New Americans Policy Council has identified a number of recommendations and standards to improve the provision of services to immigrant and refugee communities throughout Illinois.

These strategic recommendations will help Illinois lead the nation when it comes to providing opportunities for newcomers, and will allow us to standardize and improve key services that Illinois provides to immigrants and refugees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rod Blagojevich'.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor



For the Benefit of All

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Co-chair: Juan Salgado, Instituto del Progreso Latino
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Sheri Steisel, National Conference of State Legislatures, Washington D.C.



From the sweat of the migrant farm workers to the talents of foreign-born engineers and entrepreneurs, Illinois has been enriched by its newcomers. When immigrants see themselves as Illinoisans, they give their best to build a greater future for themselves and for the state they have adopted as their new home.

We thank Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich for recognizing the positive contributions and potential of immigrants to Illinois' economic, social and cultural vibrancy. The creation of the New Americans Executive Order is a groundbreaking action that once again places Illinois as a leader in the nation. By taking a proactive approach to integrating the growing immigrant population, Illinois is building on the assets of its new residents and establishing a competitive edge among states.

We owe a deep gratitude to the members of the New American Policy Council, the National Advisory Council and issue experts who have contributed their knowledge, expertise and many long hours over the course of the year to help develop strategic recommendations that will ensure successful integration of our newest Illinoisans for the betterment of our state.

Sincerely,

Ngoan Le

New Americans Policy Council
Co-Chair

Juan Salgado

New Americans Policy Council
Co-Chair



For the Benefit of All



Governor Rod Blagojevich signing the New Americans Executive Order on November 19, 2005 at the Immigrant Justice Convention, hosted by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, in Chicago.

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Executive Summary

On November 19, 2005, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed the New Americans Executive Order, a first-in-the-nation attempt to adopt a coherent, strategic, and proactive state government approach to integrate the rapidly growing immigrant population of Illinois. For this purpose, the Executive Order created a New Americans Policy Council comprised of 24 prominent Illinois business, faith, labor, community, philanthropic, and governmental leaders with experience in this field.

In the months following the signing of the Order, the New Americans Policy Council consulted with immigrant leaders, Illinois government officials, and a National Advisory Panel, an advisory council of national policy experts, about an overall approach to immigrant integration, as well as on the specific issues of U.S. citizenship, acquisition of English, education, health care, and human services. The Policy Council hosted two large consultation dinners with hundreds of immigrant leaders from many diverse ethnic communities to learn their priorities and recommendations. The Policy Council's work was staffed by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights, with the assistance of national policy experts at the Migration Policy Institute and the National Immigration Forum. This project was possible with the philanthropic support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Joyce Foundation.¹

In addition, the Executive Order launched a similar policy development track within the state government of Illinois by creating the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy within the Governor's Office. The Office coordinates the work of an Interagency Task Force, comprised of high-level state agency and department officials, charged with examining how the state government can systematically address its rapidly changing population. The following report presents the first year results of this two-year policy project.

From 1990 to 2005, the foreign-born population of Illinois increased from 926,904 to 1,695,289.² Smaller cities and towns are for the first time receiving substantial numbers of immigrants, while Chicago suburbs are now home to more immigrants than the City of Chicago itself. Twenty percent of Illinois's population is composed of immigrants and their children, who make up more than 51 percent of the state's annual net population growth.³ Integrating these newcomers is in the best social and economic interest of all Illinoisans and will benefit all members of Illinois society. The State of Illinois must strategically leverage the resources, knowledge, energy, and imagination of its population, including the high-skilled and low-skilled workforce and impressive entrepreneurial talent that immigrants bring to the state.

At the beginning of the 20th century, an immigrant workforce was key to shaping Illinois's economic prosperity as a center of agriculture and agricultural processing, transportation, manufacturing, and retail. Current immigrants, like those in the past, come to Illinois to work and to contribute. As we enter the 21st century, immigrants are playing a similar role in meeting the appetite of our emerging global economy for both a high-skilled technical and entrepreneurial workforce and a low-skilled

service and agricultural/food processing workforce. In high-skilled jobs, immigrants today make up 25 percent of computer and mathematical workers, 19 percent of architectural and engineering workers, and 19 percent of health diagnosing workers.⁴ Among low-skilled occupations, immigrants constitute 37 percent of building maintenance workers; 27 percent of food preparation workers; and 22 percent of farming, fishing, and forestry workers.⁵

The successful integration of our new arrivals and their children is essential for the continued prosperity of the state's increasingly globalized economy. Illinois is a moderate state and has responded to the growth of immigrants and the need for immigrant integration in a practical, bi-partisan way. Under the Republican administrations of Governors Edgar and Ryan, a series of initiatives on English acquisition, U.S. citizenship, and access to health care and basic services for immigrants and refugees were launched. These efforts have been continued and enhanced under the Democratic administration of Governor Blagojevich, himself the son of immigrants.

"Immigrant integration" is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving community work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities that engage and transform all community members. Our nation's immigration policy is set at the federal level, but the consequences of those policies, with their successes and limitations, must be addressed by state and local governments. Efforts to integrate immigrants would be more effective if the federal government also assumed responsibility in providing overarching support and direction. With the continuing lack of federal leadership on this important issue, the Policy Council urges Illinois to lead the nation in formulating and implementing a strategic and cohesive immigrant integration policy.

While Illinois has undertaken several efforts to advance immigrant integration, neither it nor any other state has developed a comprehensive and strategic integration policy. Given the rapidly evolving demographics; the fast paced changes of an increasingly global economy; and the growing demand for both high-skilled and low-skilled workers; immigrant integration is one of the most overlooked issues of governance.

The Policy Council's strategic approach emphasizes strategies that allow immigrants to be empowered to participate to the fullest extent possible in our economic and civic life, while fostering social cohesion with their new neighbors.

-
- The recommendations focused first on the challenge of integrating large numbers of adult immigrants with varying levels of education and skills.
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- The recommendations next look at the strategic steps most likely to positively impact the future of the many children of immigrants in Illinois.
-
- The Policy Council then made recommendations about what steps Illinois State Government should take to effectively serve newcomers.
-
- The final recommendations cover State actions to assist partnerships and build capacity for immigrant integration efforts at the local level, especially in new immigrant communities.
-

Rather than offering a laundry list of expensive programs that would address these four areas, the Policy Council strove to distinguish which efforts would be most strategic and beneficial to both the State of Illinois and its immigrant communities. The following recommendations offer a strategy for responding to these challenges.



Summary of Recommendations

Challenge 1

Assist adult newcomers to quickly become fully contributing and integrated members of society by addressing barriers of language, skill transfer, citizenship status, and skill acquisition. *The State can help to address the fact that, whether high- or low-skilled, all immigrants and refugees face barriers caused by issues of language, citizenship and job skills.*

Recommendation: Ensure English attainment through the implementation of a “We Want to Learn English” campaign. English language proficiency is a key ingredient to the successful integration of immigrants, enhancing their earning power and allowing them to participate fully in their communities. The Policy Council urges the Governor’s office, working with the Illinois Community College Board, the business community, educators, and immigrant advocates, to create, fund, and implement a “We Want to Learn English” campaign, making Illinois the best state in the nation in assisting immigrants to learn English. This program should receive adequate funding, and provide high-quality, accessible instruction in English, centered in the communities and institutions where immigrants live and work.

Recommendation: Encourage U.S. citizenship for eligible legal residents by expanding the State’s New Americans Initiative. In 2005, the State partnered with ICIRR to launch the New Americans Initiative (NAI). Highly successful in its first year, NAI has assisted thousands of immigrants in attaining U.S. citizenship. Expanding NAI, especially to communities with new and growing immigrant populations, will enable the program to reach even more of the 404,000 immigrants in Illinois who are currently eligible for citizenship and facilitate a more rapid integration of ethnically and geographically diverse populations.⁶

Recommendation: Assist highly-educated and high-skilled immigrants and refugees to transfer their foreign professional credentials, allowing them to practice their vocations and contribute to the state’s economy through the creation of a state-certification assistance program. Providing programs to assist professionals and skilled trades-people to become re-credentialed in Illinois will allow our state to more effectively draw upon the skills of the immigrant population and enhance our competitive advantage in the global market. These programs should be designed with the input of the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, affected business communities, and immigrant organizations.

Recommendation: Help low-skilled immigrants create a practical career ladder by tying English instruction and vocational training to advancement within specific industries such as restaurants, hotels, tourism, and health care. Bilingual career path and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) programs can offer immigrants a foothold in expanding industries that lead to upward socioeconomic mobility. Such programs should be designed in collaboration with industry representatives, community colleges, and community-based organizations (CBOs) and should provide trained workers for local employers to fill key jobs throughout the state.

Challenge 2

Assist children of immigrants to maximize their potential. *Children who have limited English proficiency and who grow up in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken experience lower academic performance than do their English-speaking peers. Their parents are also less likely to participate in school activities and find resources that could help their children succeed. While Illinois has already taken important steps for the benefit of all children, such as Kid Care and Preschool For All, more needs to be done to ensure their success.*

Recommendation: Encourage the development of early childhood education programs that involve parents and encourage English acquisition as a component of existing early childhood education programs. The State should make funding available for local community partnerships that involve immigrant parents in their children’s learning at the preschool and grade school levels. Working with the Illinois State Board of Education, the State should explore the availability of federal No Child Left Behind funding. In addition, the Early Learning Council guiding the Preschool for All program should include English and parental involvement components in the program, and thus lay a solid foundation for the future educational success of immigrant children.

Recommendation: Fund dual-language pilot programs to encourage children of immigrants and refugees to retain their parents’ languages and develop fluency in non-English languages for other children. Fluency in multiple languages is becoming ever more important in this increasingly integrated global economy. As we assist immigrant children in learning English, Illinois should also encourage the children of immigrants and refugees to retain their parents’ languages. Working with the Illinois State Board of Education, the State should fund and assist local school districts in the development of dual language instruction programs - which have the additional benefit of teaching a second language to non-immigrant children at an early age.

Challenge 3:

Ensure that immigrants can access the services and opportunities offered by the State. *Language and cultural barriers often prevent new residents from fully utilizing resources that would benefit them, their communities, and ultimately Illinois as a whole.*

Recommendation: Every state agency should develop a language and workforce diversity plan to ensure that immigrants and refugees can meaningfully access state services. Such plans should incorporate multilingual workforce development, interpretation and translation services, as well as consistent data collection and analysis methods. State agencies should look for “best practices” among state contractors and assist other contractors to achieve similar results. The Governor’s Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy should monitor the implementation and assessment of agency plans.

Challenge 4:

Ensure practical, local access to state programs. *While state programs may be well-intentioned, they will only be meaningful if they are accessible where immigrants and refugees live and work.*

Recommendation: Strengthen partnerships with community organizations that work with immigrants and refugees, particularly in emerging immigrant communities, and help to build their capacity. The point of daily contact between most immigrants and the government is at local public schools or adult education classes at the local community college, while the organizations most trusted are the faith and community organizations upon which families rely. Collaboration between the State and these important intermediaries will be essential to the success of any immigrant integration strategy.

Recommendation: The State of Illinois, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Education should develop model templates for local immigrant integration and highlight best practices across the state to assist local communities to effectively address challenges posed by demographic changes. The Governor’s Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy should also consider annual awards that highlight the best practice partnerships.

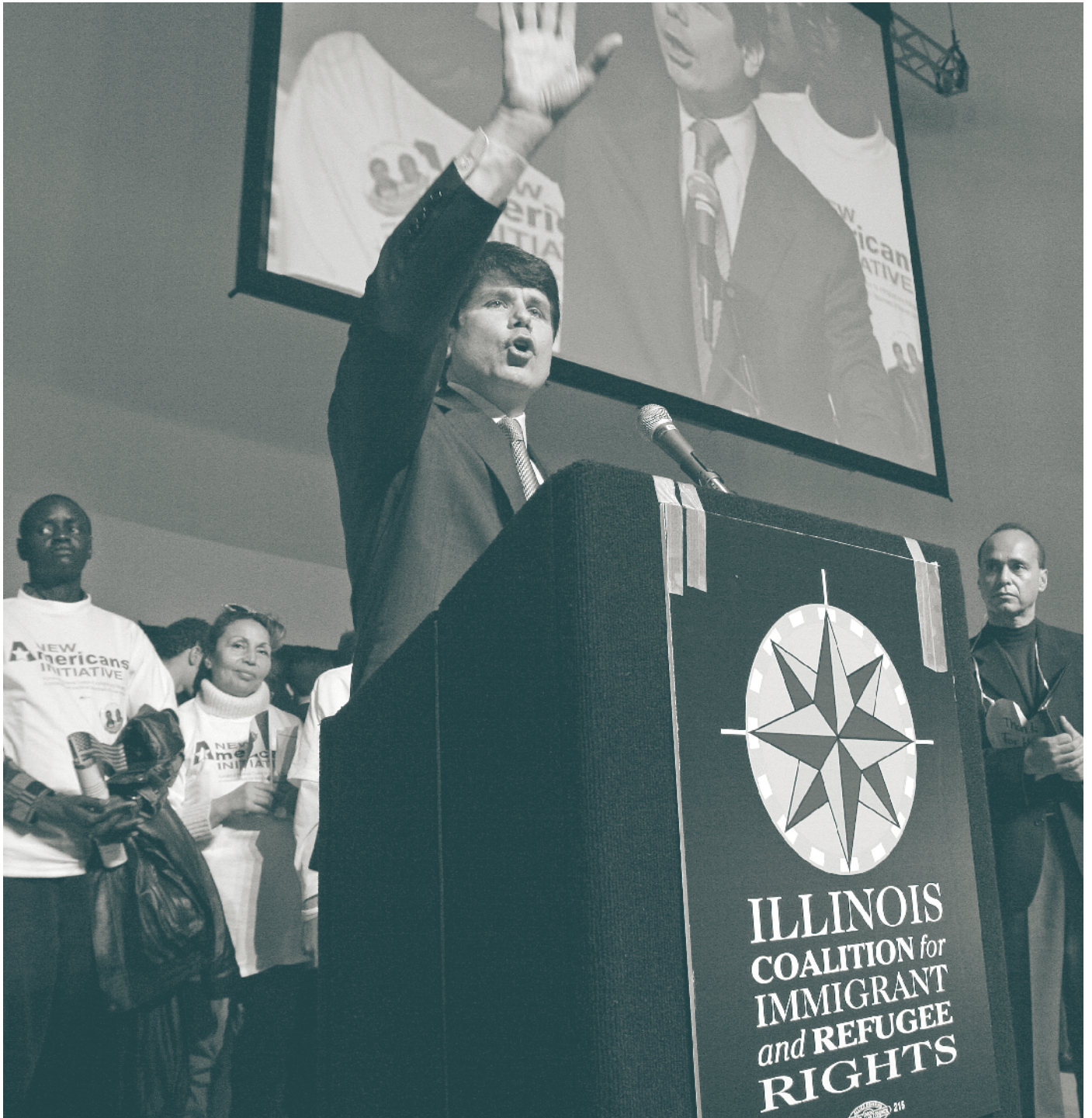
Recommendation: The Governor’s Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy should be assigned the ongoing role of monitoring implementation of these strategic recommendations. The Governor’s Office of New Americans should be made permanent to focus on the rapidly increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees in Illinois. The Office will be necessary to monitor and implement the recommendations developed under the New Americans Executive Order, as well as to address future issues.

As the United States continues to grapple with immigration policy, Illinois is faced with the challenge of building a better future for all of our state’s residents, immigrants and native-born alike. Immigrants already play a vital role in our state’s economy. Our economy is tied to global markets and immigrants in both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs contribute to our competitiveness. Given this reality, Illinois needs to adopt proactive policies that will leverage the skills and assets of its immigrants and prepare future generations for their responsibilities in our collective prosperity.

Immigrants want what all Americans want – to pursue the American Dream of opportunity for their families, to contribute and participate fully in society, and to be treated fairly by government and public institutions. Assisting immigrants quickly integrate into their new communities enables them sooner to make meaningful contributions to our economy and society, and move from newcomers to neighbors in our communities.

The report of the Policy Council and Interagency Task Force mark the end of the first year of this landmark policy project, but is just the beginning of a new way to work with all of Illinois’s residents. By implementing the policies identified in this joint update and the companion reports, Illinois will lead the nation in a positive, strategic approach to assist immigrants to become our neighbors, for the benefit of all. ●





Background: The Illinois New Americans Executive Order

On November 19, 2005, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed a first-in-the-nation New Americans Executive Order. This Executive Order launched a two-year policy project to move the State of Illinois to adopt a coherent, strategic, and proactive approach to integrate its rapidly growing immigrant population. The following report presents the first year results of this policy project.

The New Americans Executive Order Project follows more than a century of private and government initiatives in Illinois to integrate immigrants and refugees into American society. During the “Great Migration” of Irish, German, Polish, Czech, Italian, and Jewish immigrants of the mid-to-late 19th and early 20th centuries, the people of Illinois developed creative and effective ways to absorb the newcomers, benefit from their strengths, and alleviate the problems and tensions that come with rapid population change. For instance, Jane Addams’s Hull House launched a national settlement house movement, and social service agencies, such as Travelers and Immigrants Aid and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, were created. Religious groups and fraternal organizations built institutions that offered immigrants a sense of ownership and protection, and the immigrant communities of Illinois put down their roots and flourished.

One hundred years later, our nation is experiencing another “Great Migration.” Illinois has risen as a national leader in developing practical solutions and model projects for immigrant integration, one of the most overlooked issues in American governance and local economic development today. While immigration policy is set at the national level, the consequences of this policy, for better

and for worse, must be addressed at the state and local levels. Currently 13.6 percent of the state’s population, or one in eight persons, is foreign-born, and over 35,000 immigrants come to Illinois each year.⁷ One in five Illinoisans is either an immigrant or child of an immigrant.

The goal of the New Americans Executive Order Project is to determine the most effective strategies for immigrant integration in Illinois. For this purpose, the Executive Order created a New Americans Policy Council comprised of 24 prominent Illinois business, faith, labor, community, philanthropic, and governmental leaders with experience in this field. The Policy Council consulted with immigrant leaders, Illinois government officials, and a National Advisory Panel, an advisory council of national policy experts, about an overall approach to immigrant integration, as well as on the specific issues of U.S. citizenship, acquisition of English, education, health care, and human services. The Council hosted two large consultation dinners with hundreds of immigrant leaders from many diverse ethnic communities to learn their priorities and recommendations. The Policy Council’s work was staffed by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights, with the assistance of national policy experts at the Migration Policy Institute and the National Immigration Forum. This project was possible with the philanthropic support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Joyce Foundation. The following report presents the first year results of this two-year policy project.

In addition, the Executive Order launched a similar policy development track within Illinois state government by creating the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy in the Governor’s Office. The Office coordinates the work of the Interagency Task Force, comprised of high-level officials of state agencies and departments and charged with examining how state government can systematically address its rapidly changing population. The Office will issue its own set of recommendations to the state government in a companion report entitled “Immigrant Integration: Improving Policy for Education, Health and Human Services for Illinois’ Immigrants and Refugees.” ●

What is immigrant integration?

Immigrant integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

– Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees⁸



Context

Immigrants are Key Contributors to the Prosperity and Prominence of Illinois in the Global Economy

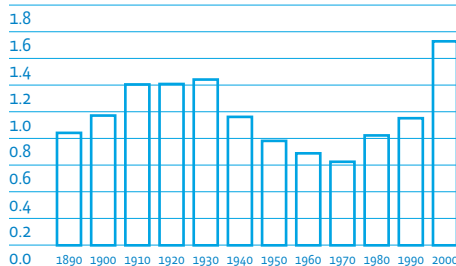
Illinois' economy has historically relied on the contributions of immigrants to its agricultural, transportation, manufacturing, and retail industries.

Since Illinois became a state in 1818, immigrants have been an integral part of its cultural makeup and key contributors to its economic development. In the early to mid-1800s, immigrants from northern and western Europe settled the state's fertile rural areas and developed its strong agricultural base. They built hundreds of small market towns around the needs of agricultural communities, some of which later grew into vital cities. As the transportation, packaging, and storage of food products and the manufacturing of mechanized equipment became integral features of Illinois' agrarian economy, cities situated near water and railroads became increasingly influential. They were the economic hubs favored by immigrants because they offered work and the opportunity to develop new industries. The manufacturing, retail, and transportation industries eventually took on a life of their own and were no longer exclusively connected to agriculture. Illinois, and in particular Chicago, rose to national prominence due to effective strategies that leveraged the confluence of location, transportation, manufacturing, food processing, retail sales, continuous innovation, and large-scale immigration. While Chicago is the best known of places in Illinois for the contributions of immigrants, there are hundreds of other towns in the state, from large cities like Rockford to smaller communities such as Galva and Bishop Hill, where the imprint of immigrants' work, cultures, languages, and foods dates back to the historical growth and development of Illinois.

In 1889, Governor Fifer told the Illinois General Assembly that Illinois "offers far better opportunities for the laboring man than any other place."⁹ In 1890, immigrants comprised 55 percent of Chicago's workforce.¹⁰ After the turn of the 20th century, immigrants to the United States and to Illinois remained predominantly European,

but the newcomers were increasingly Slavic, Italian, Jewish, or Greek, along with Mexican and Arab immigrants. By 1910, there were 1.2 million immigrants in Illinois. About 70% of them lived in Chicago and Cook County, while other large settlements included Rockford, Joliet, Aurora, and Elgin. Immigrants planted a footprint of hard work, family, and culture wherever opportunity and industry converged.¹¹

Chart 1: Illinois Foreign-Born Population, 1890–2000. (Population in millions)



Source: US Census Bureau.

In 2005, 1.7 million immigrants called Illinois home, about half of whom arrived in the last ten years. Accounting for more than 51 percent of the state's annual net population growth since 2000,¹² and nearly 60% of its growth between 1990 and 2000, immigrants provide Illinois with a critical human resource at a time when the state's native-born population is aging.¹³ Immigrants accounted for 85 percent of the growth in the Illinois labor force between 1990 and 2000.¹⁴ Between 2000 and 2005, as the number of native-born workers in the Illinois labor force shrank, immigrants more than made up for this loss and enabled the state labor force to grow overall by 2.7%.¹⁵ Illinois immigrants now come from all corners of the globe: as of Census 2000, about 48 percent are from Latin America, 26 percent from Europe, 24 percent from Asia, and 2 percent from Africa.¹⁶

It is difficult to think of a more fortunate convergence: a new population encompassing a wide range of languages, skills, and cultures, determined to offer their families a better life and contribute to their adopted country, coupled with workforce needs, multicultural capacities, and vision that will allow Illinois to maintain its successful position in a global economy. When it markets Chicago as a business location, World Business Chicago stresses Chicago's "global melting pot" which has drawn "the peoples of the world to be proudly hyphenated Americans, to make money, to build a life, to raise a family, and to live and work together as Chicagoans."¹⁷

The business community clearly recognizes the importance of immigrants to Illinois's economic growth and development.

While building off its traditional strengths in agriculture, transportation, and manufacturing, Illinois is also emerging as a major global player in trade, technology, and medical care, and as a center of tourism.

In order to meet the needs of global businesses, Illinois must have a global workforce. Only by strategically leveraging the resources, knowledge, energy, and imagination of our residents will our state continue to find itself at the forefront of the nation. Illinois is home to 34 Fortune 500 companies specializing in the aerospace, financial, pharmaceutical, insurance, large retail, medical, airline, and publishing industries (see Table 1). According to World Business Chicago, the Chicago area ranks first in the nation for high-technology employment (347,100 workers, \$35 billion regional high-tech output, and over 7,100 companies), truck, intermodal, rail, and air distribution, business service professionals (82 percent growth in employment from 1990 to 2000), and urban medical districts.¹⁹

The Chicago metropolitan area ranks first in manufacturing in the United States, with \$72.4 billion in regional output.²¹ Overall, food manufacturing is the leading industry in Illinois, accounting for about 1 million jobs in food and food-related fiber processing.²² However, as information technology and services continue to grow in importance, manufacturing is becoming less important in the state economy (see Table 2).

Tourism is the second largest revenue producing industry in Illinois and immigrants play a central role in the industry as owners, managers, and workers in restaurants and hotels, as artistic guides, and as the producers of the cultural mosaic that attracts visitors to the state.²⁴ In 2004, travelers spent over \$67 million daily in Illinois businesses, generating \$1.2 billion for state tax revenues and \$578 million for local governments, reducing the tax burden for an Illinois family of four by \$500 annually.²⁵ The Taste of Chicago, featuring the diverse ethnic cuisine of immigrants, is the city's flagship event, generating 3.6 million visitors and \$12.3 million in revenue.²⁶ The cultural capital of immigrants thus contributes substantially to the prominence of Illinois as a tourism destination.

“To understand and serve the needs of our customers around the world, we recognize that we must have a workforce that’s just as diverse. We strive to attract employees from diverse backgrounds and offer an inclusive work environment where individual differences are appreciated and nurtured.”

– John Deere and Company ¹⁸

“Tourism has such a substantial impact on the Illinois economy with new revenue for the hotel, restaurant and transportation industries. Our state will continue to grow stronger, support Illinois businesses and create jobs for local workers thanks to the Taste of Chicago and other wonderful events.”

– Governor Rod Blagojevich ²⁷

Table 1: 2004 Illinois Companies in Fortune’s 500 ²⁰

IL	Company	U.S.	HQ	Industry
1	State Farm Insurance	18	Bloomington	Insurance (Mutual)
2	Boeing	21	Chicago	Aerospace & Defense
3	Sears Roebuck	32	Hoffman Estates	General Merchandise
4	Walgreen	45	Deerfield	Food and Drug Stores
5	Allstate	47	Northbrook	Insurance (Stock)
6	Archer Daniels Midland	52	Decatur	Food Production
7	Motorola	59	Schaumburg	Network & Comm. Equip.
8	Caterpillar	77	Peoria	Industrial & Farm Equip.
9	Bank One	88	Chicago	Commercial Banking
10	Abbott Laboratories	96	Abbott Park	Pharmaceuticals
11	Sara Lee	104	Chicago	Food Consumer Products
12	McDonald’s	114	Oak Park	Food Services
13	Exelon	126	Chicago	Utilities
14	Deere	131	Moline	Industrial and Farm Equip.
15	UAL	145	Elk Grove	Airline
16	Illinois Tool Works	191	Glenview	Industrial and Farm Equip.
17	Aon	199	Chicago	Diversified Financials
18	Baxter International	220	Deerfield	Medical Products & Equip
19	Smurfit-Stone Container	255	Chicago	Packaging
20	Navistar International	269	Chicago	Motor Vehicles and Parts
21	Fortune Brands	311	Lincolnshire	Home Equip. & Furnishings
22	Tribune	323	Chicago	Publishing, Printing
23	R.R. Donnelley & Sons	362	Chicago	Publishing, Printing
24	W.W. Grainger	375	Lincolnshire	Wholesale Distribution
25	CDW Computer Centers	376	Vernon Hills	Wholesalers: Electronics & Office Equip.
26	Laidlaw	391	Naperville	Transportation and Logistics
27	Brunswick	420	Lake Forest	Transportation Equipment
28	United Stationers	439	Des Plaines	Wholesalers: Electronics & Office Equip
29	Tenneco Automotive	450	Lake Forest	Motor Vehicles and Parts
30	USG	458	Chicago	Building Materials
31	ServiceMaster	463	Downers Grove	Diversified Outsourcing
32	Telephone & Data Systems	480	Chicago	Telecommunications
33	Old Republic International	491	Chicago	Insurance (Stock)
34	Equity Office Properties	493	Chicago	Real Estate

Table 2: State of Illinois Industry Employment Projections: 2002–2012 ²³

Ten Largest Growth Industries (new jobs)	
Education and Health Services	181,504
Professional and Business Services	151,801
Health Care and Social Assistance	124,752
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	100,191
Administrative and Waste Mgmt Services	81,029
Administrative and Support Services	78,684
Leisure and Hospitality	76,182
Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services	66,034
*Accommodation and Food Services	59,845
Educational Services: Private and Public	56,752
Total: Job Replacement (continuing jobs)	
Sales and Related Occupations	264,910
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	257,380
*Food Prep & Serving Occupations	223,310
*Retail Sales Workers	173,240
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations	148,680
Education, Training & Library Occupations	147,220
Management Occupations	146,630
*Production Occupations	140,870
*Food & Beverage Serving Workers	133,640
Healthcare Practitioners & Tech Occupations	105,920

*Jobs with high Latino concentrations.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Economic Information and Analysis Division



Immigrants are essential to the economic success of Illinois as they provide critical high- and low-skilled labor and impressive entrepreneurial talent.

Immigrants are and will continue to be a critical source of talent and energy for our state's economic success. Immigrants in Illinois fall into three distinct categories of workers. First, some immigrants come as highly educated and trained professionals and work in areas of the thriving new economy such as the medical, pharmaceutical, engineering, high-tech, and communications sectors. Another group of immigrants arrives with lower levels of education and fills jobs in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, hotel, restaurant, and the tourism trade. Finally, a disproportionately large number of immigrants becomes entrepreneurs, often serving immigrant communities and in many cases revitalizing neighborhoods.

In high-skilled jobs, immigrants constituted 25 percent of computer and mathematical workers, 19 percent of architectural and engineering workers, and 19 percent of health diagnosing workers in 2005 (see Table 3).²⁸ In generally low-skill occupations, immigrants made up 37 percent of building maintenance workers, 27 percent of food preparation workers, and 22 percent of farming, fishing, forestry workers, a category that includes landscaping jobs. Additionally, immigrants comprised 27 percent of manufacturing workers, including 34 percent in the state's food manufacturing sector.²⁹ Experts assume that each of these proportions represent a minimum since thousands of immigrant workers are not captured by official data.³⁰

Self-employment is commonly seen as a vehicle for achieving upward economic mobility. However, a few specific reasons account for why immigrants disproportionately pursue that course. In 2000, 9 percent of immigrants in the Chicago metropolitan area were self-employed, as compared to 8 percent of the native born.³² Many highly educated immigrants encounter barriers to economic achievement in the United States due to difficulties in transferring over their foreign-earned credentials to the American labor market. As a consequence of failing to find employment commensurate with their education, training, and experience, many turn to self-employment.³³ Low-skilled workers, on the other hand, may be channeled into self-employment by a lack of English language proficiency.

Table 3: Immigrants Are a Critical Part of the Illinois Workforce ³¹

Industry	%
Production	38.3
Building and grounds clearing & maintenance	37.0
Food preparation and serving	26.6
Construction & extraction	25.8
Computer & mathematical	24.7
Farming, fishing & forestry	21.8
Transportation & material moving	21.3
Architecture & engineering	19.3
Personal care & service	19.1
Life, physical & social science	18.9
Health – diagnosis and treatment practitioners & technical	18.8
Installation, maintenance & repair	18.0
Health technologists & technicians	14.0
Management	12.3
Healthcare support	12.2
Sales and related	11.1
Financial specialists	10.8
Education, training & library	10.3
Office & administrative support	9.9
Business operations specialists	9.6
Community & social services	8.7
Arts, design, entertainment, sports & media	7.2
Protective service	4.6
Legal	4.6
All Illinois Occupations	17.3

Source: Tabulations of Census Bureau data by Rob Paral and Associates / 2005 American Community Survey

Immigrants work at rates equal to or higher than the native born population

Contrary to the thinking of some, the labor force participation rate of immigrants in the United States matches that of the native-born population. The employment rate for foreign-born workers over age 15 has been higher than 90 percent nationwide since 1990. In Illinois, the civilian labor force participation rate among immigrants was 69 percent in 2005, higher than the overall state rate of 67.5 percent and the native born rate of 67 percent. The unemployment rate among immigrants in Illinois was 6.8 percent in 2005, lower than that of the state overall (8 percent) and of its native born population (8.3 percent).³⁵ Some 877,000 immigrants worked in Illinois's formal economy in 2000, as well as thousands of other workers uncounted by official instruments, making immigrants no less than 14 percent of the state's overall workforce.³⁶ Immigrants are harvesting mushrooms in De Pue, processing pork in Beardstown, canning vegetables in Mendota, packing meat in Joslin, assembling tractors in Moline,

"We believe that by being innovative, pro-active and flexible, and ensuring that businesses have all the resources they need to be successful, Illinois can compete for some of the most prestigious and successful companies from across the US and around the world."

– Governor Rod Blagojevich ³⁴

building houses in Round Lake, advancing cellular technology in Schaumburg, and teaching engineering, nursing the sick, and developing new medical cures across the state's hospitals and universities.

In sum, immigrants are employed in different ways depending on their skills, education, command of the English language, networks, and documentation status, but the historic relationship between immigrants and work remains strong. Given that immigrants and their children now compose more than 20 percent of the state's population and that the baby boom generation soon faces retirement, the ability of Illinois to maintain its prominent status in the global economy will largely depend on the extent to which it harnesses and leverages the resources of its immigrant families, incorporating them into the labor force and facilitating their integration into the society at large.³⁷

More than just workers, immigrants stimulate new business growth and fuel consumption.

Immigrants are, of course, much more than just workers: they bring skills, resources, and cultures with them to the United States. They stimulate new business growth wherever they live in Illinois — in foods, restaurants, clothing, and household commodities—and in the process, revive declining town centers and create new commercial districts. For example, some 40,000 Latino-owned businesses—many of which are owned by immigrant entrepreneurs, heavily staffed by immigrant workers, and patronized by immigrants customers—generated more than \$7.5 billion in 2002 revenues.³⁸ The Chicago area's undocumented population alone generates \$5.45 billion of economic activity, accounting for 1.5 percent of the gross regional product for the metropolitan Chicago area.³⁹

The housing market, where immigrants form a large portion of recent homebuyers, is a solid indicator of the fact that immigrants

are propelling the economy as consumers and investors. In the city of Chicago and suburban Cook County, immigrant homeowners are responsible for 80 percent of new homeownership over the last five years.⁴⁰ In the Chicago collar counties, areas not usually associated with immigrant homeownership, foreign-born persons are responsible for more than 40 percent of the net growth in home ownership rates. Statewide, there was a net increase of 119,000 new immigrant homeowners in Illinois between 2000 and 2005. The surge of immigrant home-buying shows that immigrants are settling in Illinois and investing in their new home communities. Their investments strengthen the state's banking and credit industries by infusing new purchasing power into the market.

Table 4: Immigrants as Share of New Homeowners, 2000–2005⁴¹

	Δ	%
Chicago	30,596	56.5
Suburban Cook	42,702	80.9
7 Collar counties	145,959	42.8
Metro Chicago	219,257	52.2
94 Downstate counties	63,993	7.9
Statewide	502,507	46.5

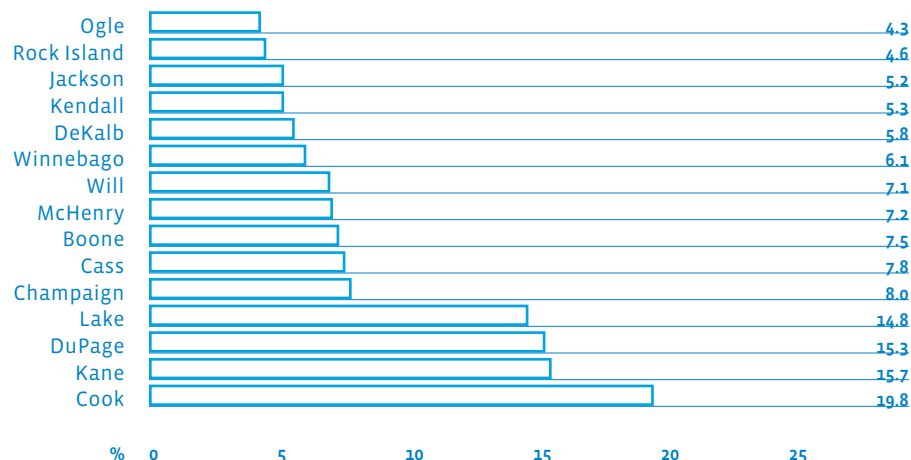
Δ = Change in Homeowners, 2000–2005
% = Immigrant Share of New Homeowners

Source: Census Bureau data tabulated by Rob Paral and Associates

The geographic dispersal of immigrants beyond the traditional destination of Chicago and into suburban and rural areas poses a new strategic challenge for immigrant integration in Illinois.

Throughout the 20th century, the city of Chicago was the main destination for immigrants to Illinois. But by 2005, immigrant families were increasingly settling in the Chicago suburbs and downstate, with only 35 percent of immigrants to Illinois establishing roots in Chicago.⁴² In 2000, the foreign-born population of Cook, DuPage and Kane Counties exceeded 15 percent, with Lake County just missing that mark (see Figure 1).⁴³ Recent Census data show that while the immigrant population of Chicago dropped 5 percent between 2000 and 2005 (first time since the 1960s), the total immigrant population of Illinois grew by 177,000 people.⁴⁴ Almost all of this growth occurred in the suburbs of Chicago.⁴⁵ By 2005, over 90 percent of Illinois' immigrants were spread across five counties: Cook (63.6

Figure 1: Top 15 Illinois Counties by Percent Immigrant⁴⁸



percent); DuPage (10.0 percent); Lake (7.6 percent); Kane (5.3 percent); and Will (4.3 percent).⁴⁶ Among immigrants, the population growing most rapidly in the suburbs is naturalized U.S. citizens, with the rate of naturalization (23 percent) far outpacing the overall growth of the immigrant population (12 percent).⁴⁷ This trend of increased naturalization indicates that these immigrants are making Illinois home.

Employment and housing serve as major magnets to suburban Cook County. Of the close to 2.2 million private sector employment opportunities available in Cook County in March 2005, 49 percent were in Chicago and 51 percent were in Cook County outside of Chicago.⁴⁹ Jobs in manufacturing, construction, and wholesale and retail trade are more available in suburban Cook County than in the city of Chicago.⁵⁰ Since housing prices in many parts of Chicago are increasing and gentrification is forcing lower income populations to leave, a substantial number of immigrants are choosing to settle in more reasonably priced suburbs.

Out of the 102 counties in Illinois, thirty experienced more than a 100 percent increase in their immigrant populations between 1990 and 2000 (see Table 5).⁵¹ Most strikingly, Cass County witnessed a more than 1000 percent surge in its foreign-born residents, as immigrants came to work in food processing plants in the county seat, Beardstown.⁵² Communities like Cobden, Arcola, and Mendota are also transforming as immigrants settle, replenish the workforce, and revive the local economies and communities. With immigrant families in Illinois increasingly settling outside the city of Chicago, it is vital that their receiving communities pro-actively address the challenges and reap the benefits of immigrant integration. ●

Table 5: Top 25 Illinois Counties by % Change in Immigrant Population: 1990–2000⁵³

Δ = % Increase in Immigrant Population, 1990–2000
New = % of Immigrants Arrived Since 1990

Rank	County	Δ	New
1	Cass	1141	77
2	Pulaski	500	21
3	Pike	470	43
4	Calhoun	308	13
5	Gallatin	283	48
6	Union	237	54
7	DeWitt	231	34
8	Crawford	216	33
9	Piatt	191	47
10	Douglas	170	53
11	Mercer	150	40
12	Boone	149	47
13	Ogle	147	50
14	Schuyler	145	56
15	Kane	142	51
16	McHenry	138	46
17	Kankakee	136	47
18	Effingham	135	43
19	Hardin	134	76
20	Lake	130	47
21	Jo Daviess	129	43
22	Will	128	40
23	Scott	127	28
24	Iroquois	124	44
25	Kendall	124	33

Source: US Census Bureau data tabulated by Cainkar and Beltangady⁵⁴



City of Kankakee

Approximately 15 years ago, Kankakee began to experience a substantial growth in the number of Mexican immigrants settling in the area. At first, the new residents lived in the same neighborhood, renting apartments and generally staying to themselves. Unfortunately, complaints of some long-term neighbors went unresolved because of language barriers, which led to miscommunication and non-communication. It also became evident that Mexican immigrants were being victimized by criminals, who knew that their money was often hidden in their apartments or carried on their person because of their inability to establish savings and checking accounts at local banks.

The City of Kankakee responded to these issues in several ways: It was obvious that the new residents needed to become part of the larger community, not a distinct and separate community. Spanish-speaking police officers were assigned to meet with the Mexican immigrants and other residents to resolve neighborhood disputes. Beginning in 1994, a Citizen Police Academy for Spanish-speaking residents was established and taught by the city's bilingual police officers. The Academy classes are taught in a local church where English as a Second Language courses are also provided. The new residents were encouraged to form their own neighborhood groups to elect spokesmen and leaders to meet with City officials and department heads. The Mayor of Kankakee, Kankakee's Police Chief, the Superintendent of Schools, and representatives of the local banks, colleges and newspaper traveled to San Pablo Casacuarian, Mexico, from where the majority of the new immigrants came. The delegation

met with the elected officials and business leaders there and established a Sister City relationship between the two cities. The elected representatives of Casacuarian have also visited the city of Kankakee.

Kankakee officials met with the local banks and most agreed to establish bank accounts accepting Mexican passports or the matricula consular I.D. Kankakee Community College also agreed to accept the matricula as identification to enroll in classes. The City contacted the Mexican Consulate in Chicago which agreed to send their Mobile Consulate Office to Kankakee to make passports and the matricula available to eligible Mexican immigrants. Each year, hundreds of immigrants meet with the Mexican Mobile Consulate office in Kankakee. With the assistance of city officials, the representatives of the local Mexican immigrant group met with the local school district and park district to establish and maintain soccer fields and form soccer clubs and leagues. Neighborhood Partners of Kankakee, a not-for-profit affordable housing organization, hired a Spanish-speaking employee to encourage and assist the immigrants in home ownership and provide safe and affordable rental housing with reputable landlords. Spanish classes have been established and offered to all City of Kankakee employees. In addition to actively recruiting people of Mexican descent, the City provides payroll incentives to city employees who are bilingual.

Although all of the issues have not been resolved, the lines of communication have been opened and maintained between with Mexican immigrants and the City of Kankakee.

Michael Kinkade, Chief of Police

Negative local responses to newcomers

Municipalities such as Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and Valley Park, Missouri, have recently passed ordinances targeting new, largely undocumented Latino communities emerging in their midst.⁵⁵ During the past several years, a number of Illinois communities have taken similar measures against their newcomers.

The village of Addison faced a housing discrimination lawsuit brought by the US Department of Justice in 1995. The suit alleged that the village singled out majority-Hispanic areas as "blighted" and targeted those areas for private development. The suit settled in 1997 with the village agreeing to \$1.4 million for a comprehensive urban re-development plan.⁵⁶

Waukegan passed an ordinance in 2003 setting a \$500 fine for driving without a license or insurance and \$175 towing fees that increase \$30 per day. According to Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde, the city passed the ordinance in response to accidents involving undocumented and uninsured drivers.⁵⁷ Indeed, the ordinance has disproportionately harmed undocumented immigrants, who, if they lack Social Security numbers, cannot get driver's licenses under Illinois law. The ordinance has drawn vocal protests from immigrant advocates in the community.

In February 2006, the schools in Elmwood Park, a Chicago suburb, denied admission to a student who was present in the United States on a temporary visa. The town's school district ultimately backed down after the Illinois State Board of Education Jesse Rios threatened to cut off \$3.5 million in state school aid to the district.⁵⁸ The controversy revealed deeper rifts within the suburb as Latino immigrants replace the white ethnic community.⁵⁹



The Policy Council's Vision

The Policy Council encourages the state government of Illinois to invest in the capacity of immigrants to help build Illinois' future. Illinois should develop strategies that build on the strengths and potential contributions of its immigrant communities and become a national and global leader in immigrant integration.

In the U.S. the federal government has exclusive control over immigration policy: standards and quotas for admission of legal immigrants, employer sanctions, naturalization procedures and the like. However, it is state and local governments that must deal with the consequences of federal immigration policy, particularly with respect to the provision of health care, education, law enforcement, and other services to communities. For instance, in the early 19th century, several Eastern seaboard states attempted to impose an entry tax on arriving immigrants in order to fund services that might be required by newcomers who arrived destitute. The Supreme Court rejected the states' attempts to tax entrants, saying that the power over admission was exclusively reserved for the federal government. In the late 19th century, the Supreme Court similarly rejected attempts by the state of California to bar the entry and settlement of Chinese immigrants. In 1994, the federal courts struck down California's Proposition 187, which would have required state employees to report suspected undocumented immigrants to the federal government. Today, faced with rising numbers of legal and undocumented immigrants in need of locally-provided services, states have adopted a range of positions and implemented a range of policies with regard to immigrants in their midst.

Immigrant integration is an increasingly important imperative as the immigrant population of our nation and our state continues to grow in number and proportion. Despite efforts made by Illinois to move immigrant integration forward during the last few years, with citizenship initiatives and health care programs among other projects, neither Illinois nor any other state has developed a comprehensive integration policy. States must continue to deliver services to immigrants, but the federal government should assume leadership in providing overarching support and direction. While many positive, practical, and non-partisan ways of interacting with the immigrant residents of Illinois have been developed by Governors Edgar, Ryan and Blagojevich, their efforts to integrate immigrants would clearly be more effective if the federal government played a larger role in addressing this important issue. Given this context of lack of federal leadership, Illinois has an even stronger incentive to lead the nation in formulating and implementing strategic immigrant integration policies.

Illinois now has an unprecedented number of immigrants who are settling in the state at rapidly increasing rates. Immigrants are vital to our fast paced economy, which has undergone significant changes, including requiring increasing amounts of technological knowledge. Immigrant integration has never before been such a pressing issue. Responding to the needs of immigrants, whose numbers are growing, will only reap benefits for all members of Illinois society, native and foreign-born. The Policy Council believes that now is the time to help adult immigrants quickly become productive members of our state and to prepare immigrant children for the demands of the 21st century.

"Illinois has a vast asset of individuals who by dint of ambition and even fearlessness have made extraordinary efforts to better their lives by moving to a nation with a different language, culture and society. Numerous studies and analyses have shown immigrants to be a benefit to states like Illinois, making high tax payments, excelling in business development when they have a foothold, and raising children that attain high levels of education and who themselves become substantial economic contributors."⁶⁴

– Illinois Immigrant Policy Project

What Illinois has already accomplished

The state government of Illinois has already taken significant measures to leverage the assets of immigrants and their families by transforming barriers into opportunities. In contrast to the restrictive federal vision of immigrant health, the Illinois KidCare program extended health insurance coverage to most low-income, legally-present immigrant children, regardless of when they entered the United States, and covered prenatal and postpartum care for all low-income pregnant women. The AllKids program, proposed by Governor Blagojevich and enacted by the General Assembly in 2005, provides health insurance coverage for all children in Illinois, regardless of their immigration status.⁶⁰ The Policy Council supports AllKids and urges aggressive marketing to reach all children in Illinois through local schools, CBOs, and community colleges.

Under the premise that youths should not be punished for the decisions of their parents and that hard work should be rewarded, Illinois approved in-state college tuition for undocumented students who are Illinois high school graduates and who have attended school in the state for at least three years.⁶¹ In another step to remove a fundamental barrier to a wide range of services, Illinois passed legislation in 2005 recognizing foreign government-issued identification documents (such as the Mexican *matricula consular*) as valid state identification.⁶² The State has also enacted legislation to offer better protections to day laborers, many of whom are immigrant workers.⁶³ To promote American citizenship and English proficiency in Illinois, Governor Blagojevich proposed and obtained funding for the New Americans Initiative, a three-year pilot program to provide application assistance, legal counseling, and English and citizenship classes for prospective citizens.

Most recently, Governor Blagojevich won \$45 million of funding for a Universal Preschool program that will help better prepare all Illinois children for kindergarten, including children in immigrant families.





The Policy Council's strategy is to build bridges between native-born and immigrant communities by emphasizing their shared concerns. Immigrants want what all Americans want – to pursue the American Dream of opportunity for our families, to contribute and participate fully in the society, and to be treated fairly by our government and public institutions. The recommendations in this report strive to achieve these goals by working with immigrants to weave them, their talents, and their children, into our society. Education and strategic job training, quality health care, and routes to upward socioeconomic mobility, promote economic security and productiveness for all Americans.

Because this report has been developed in partnership with the Governor's Office, the Policy Council has focused on how the state government can act. However, the Council recognizes that state government alone cannot move immigrant integration forward. Community organizations, businesses, schools, unions, philanthropy, and other actors, as well as immigrants themselves, all must contribute to this endeavor. The State nevertheless can play a key role in organizing these diverse constituencies, providing overall direction, and offering crucial resources.

The Policy Council realizes that there are many government programs that could help integrate immigrant families into our society. Its objective, however, is not to develop a laundry list of such programs, but rather to present a tight series of strategic recommendations based on its determination

of what would best assist immigrants and their receiving communities in responding to the challenges of integration.

The Policy Council's strategic approach emphasizes strategies that allow immigrants to be empowered to participate to the fullest extent possible in our economic and civic life, while fostering social cohesion with their new neighbors.

- The recommendations focus first on the challenge of integrating large numbers of adult immigrants with varying levels of education and skills.
- The recommendations next look at the strategic steps most likely to positively impact the future of the many children of immigrants in Illinois.
- The Policy Council then made recommendations about what steps Illinois state government should take to effectively serve newcomers.
- The final recommendations cover State actions to assist partnerships and build capacity for immigrant integration efforts at the local level, especially in new immigrant communities.

Although the Council identified many more issues related to the integration of immigrants in Illinois, the following recommendations offer our strategy for responding to these specific challenges. ●

Focus on Adults

Challenge 1

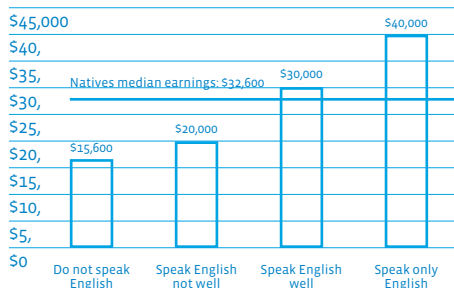
Illinois must assist the large numbers of adult newcomers to quickly become fully contributing and integrated members of society.

The Policy Council believes that the most strategic and empowering actions that the State of Illinois can take to foster immigrant integration, immigrant success, and social cohesion is to actively promote English and U.S. citizenship campaigns. The next most strategic actions provide immigrants who come with low levels of education with vocational English training that places them on a job ladder and assists highly-educated immigrants to transfer their professional qualifications and use their skills in Illinois.

A. Illinois should become a national leader in teaching immigrants to learn English so they can fully participate in the society and its economy.

Learning English is one of the most important investments of time and energy for many immigrants because English language proficiency is a key ingredient for success in education, skill development, civic participation, and community cohesion. Proficiency in the English language is required to pass the U.S. citizenship test and provides an economic advantage to immigrants as it raises their earning potential (see Chart 2). Studies show that immigrants who are English proficient earn 17 to 24 percent more than those who are not.⁶⁵

Chart 2: English Proficiency and Earnings ⁶⁶



As immigrants learn English, their earnings catch up to those of natives.

A multitude of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs serve immigrants and refugees, but they are not enough. In 2005, the Illinois Community

College Board (ICCB) served 79,856 ESL students in 80 programs across the state, representing 58.2 percent of all students in adult education classes throughout the state.⁶⁷ These programs were funded with approximately \$15.6 million and operated out of a variety of organizations, including community colleges, community-based organizations (CBOs), schools, churches, and neighborhood associations. Yet the demand for English classes persistently exceeds the capacity of available programs. Of the ten programs surveyed at community colleges in the spring of 2006, some 760 individuals were on a waiting list.⁶⁸ With more immigrants arriving in Illinois and increasingly settling in the suburbs and downstate, we need programs that will help these newcomers learn English, in locations they can access.

Educators at community colleges, social service agencies, and other programs have amassed a wealth of specialized knowledge about English language training and, in particular, about establishing programs that will work most effectively with a diverse group of immigrants with varying levels of competency in speaking, writing, and reading the English language. Immigrants would benefit most from English language training tied to job skills, parenting, mobility, or civic awareness and that incorporate more flexible schedules and locations.

Recommendation: Implement a “We Want to Learn English” campaign and lead the nation in assisting immigrants to quickly learn English.

English language proficiency is a key ingredient to the successful integration of immigrants. It enhances the earning power of immigrants and allows them to participate fully at work in their communities. English language instruction should be of high quality, of practical utility, and offered conveniently by community and faith based organizations in the workplace, prayer halls, schools, and other accessible community locations.

The state of Illinois has the knowledge and talent to lead the nation in the design and implementation of accessible and effective English language training. To realize this goal, the Policy Council recommends that the State launch a “We Want to Learn English” campaign to provide additional resources for ESL programs. As of October 2006, each chamber of the Illinois General Assembly had passed legislation granting \$25 million per year to this initiative. It would prioritize funding to programs serving areas with new immigrant communities and in non-traditional

Best Practice: National Center for Family Literacy

For the last three years, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) has operated holistic family literacy programs targeting Hispanic families across the country, including those in Chicago, Illinois. The program has now expanded to a total of 15 cities and 45 schools.

The model encourages parents – typically Hispanic mothers, but increasingly fathers, too – to visit their children’s schools during the day or, in some cases, during the evening. Available in grades K-3, the program reaches 30 parents in each site per day; waiting lists are routine. Parents receive ESL training, volunteer in their children’s classes or after-school programs, debrief with classroom teachers, and have sessions with other Hispanic parents to discuss ways to improve parenting skills. In surveys of sites around the country, parents indicate that children’s grades improve after the family participates in the program.

NCFL began this initiative through generous funding – more than \$9 million – from Toyota. In addition to grant funding, participating cities receive program development support, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and other services from NCFL. However, NCFL’s funding declines in each city over a period of three years, thereby encouraging districts to think actively and early about how to sustain the literacy program through other support. Some cities have chosen to use NCLB Title I and III funding toward these programs. In New York City, for example, the district has obtained money from the federal Department of Education, New York City, and private matches. As a result, the model, which started in three sites in New York City in 2003, will be available in thirty sites in 2007.

locations where people live, work, and meet, such as workplaces, faith communities, and public schools. Based on the amount spent on ESL classes in 2005 (\$195.35 per student), \$25 million would assist another 127,975 Illinois residents learn English. Currently, 580,000 persons over the age of 5 are limited English proficient in Illinois, an increase of 7 percent since 2000. Providing \$25 million to fund English language instruction in easily accessible locations



would go a long way in assisting people to become productive residents of Illinois.

The Policy Council urges the Governor's office, working with the Illinois Community College Board, the business community, educators, and immigrant advocates, to create, fund, and implement a "We Want to Learn English" campaign. This program should receive adequate funding, and must greatly enhance the amount of community level English classes offered by community institutions.

Specifically, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) should serve as the administrative agency for "We Want to Learn English" funds and should receive up to 50 percent of the funds. At least 50 percent of the new funds should be allocated to community programs, with priority given to organizations in communities with emerging immigrant populations. Program implementation and design should be a combined effort between ICCB and the Office of New Americans and should seek to leverage community resources by partnering with community institutions and maximizing their capacity.

B. Immigrants should become full members of their new home by gaining U.S. citizenship.

U.S. citizenship is an essential step for immigrants to successfully integrate into the political, economic, and social life of their new homeland. It allows them to demonstrate their commitment to the United States, provides them with a sense of permanence, and encourages them to invest in their families, communities, and the nation. By conferring the right to vote, serve on juries, and hold public office, citizenship offers a sense of empowerment and allows naturalized immigrants to fully participate in the civic life of their new country. Citizenship may also lead to positive economic benefits for immigrants given the positive correlation between citizenship and higher earnings.

Interest in citizenship surged in 2006, in large part due to growing concerns over anti-immigrant legislation such as the Sensenbrenner bill, passed by the United States House of Representatives in December 2005. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) web site received a record 6.6 million hits in March 2006. Downloads of the N-400 naturalization form and other forms from the website jumped from 1.8 million in February 2006 to 2.2 million in March 2006. In May 2006, 140,000 citizenship applications

were downloaded, almost twice as many as a year earlier, and between January and March 2006, USCIS received over 185,000 citizenship applications, a 19 percent increase over the same period in 2005. In the Chicago District, which covers most of Illinois and northwest Indiana, 28,865 immigrants filed for citizenship between October 2005 and July 2006, and 24,328 have become citizens.⁶⁹

Despite clear benefits and increased interest, large numbers of eligible immigrants have not yet become citizens. An estimated 9.4 million legal immigrants throughout the United States are currently eligible to naturalize, including 404,000 in Illinois.⁷⁰ A 2005 survey of legal permanent residents (LPRs) in the Chicago area commissioned by ICIRR revealed a common perception that the citizenship process was difficult. The same survey revealed that would-be citizens lacked reliable sources of information regarding citizenship, often depending solely on word-of-mouth.⁷¹

In addition to these existing procedural difficulties, the federal government has proposed or imposed several measures that make U.S. citizenship more difficult to obtain, especially for qualified immigrants with lower incomes and education levels. The cost of applying for naturalization has increased dramatically, from \$95 in 1998 to the current cost of \$400, with automatic fee increases scheduled each year. In addition, the application form has grown in length from four to ten pages. USCIS has worked to modify the citizenship test, a change that could make it harder to pass for immigrants with low levels of education,⁷² and it has also proposed a new electronic filing system that would add further costs to applicants and to the agencies that assist them.⁷³ States, localities, and communities should increase their efforts to promote citizenship and assist applicants in responding to the increasing costs and level of difficulty in gaining citizenship.

The issue of citizenship also extends to immigrants who lack access to citizenship because they are undocumented. The American economy relies extensively on immigrant workers, including undocumented immigrants. Approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants, many of whom head families with American children, have been effectively denied the right to fully participate in American society because the federal government has declined to provide them with access to legalization and citizenship. While this report is directed to state government policies and practices, the Policy Council also calls upon the federal government to enact comprehensive immigration reform that would enable the

Best practice: Santa Clara County Citizenship Services⁷⁶

After the passage of welfare reform in 1996—which severely limited even legal immigrants' access to federal means-tested social benefits—local activists lobbied the Santa Clara County Government to provide citizenship services to those affected by the benefit restrictions. In Santa Clara County, 51,000 legal immigrants were receiving Food Stamps and SSI, and the Santa Clara County government established the Santa Clara County Citizenship Project (NCCP) to target this population in the fall of 1996.

The initiative hosted free citizenship days for the 51,000 immigrants by the end of 1997. The free citizenship days offered legal support, information on naturalization services in the southern part of the county where services are scarce, outreach programs, and a trilingual citizenship hotline. The use of private contractors ensured linguistic access for speakers of Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, and Portuguese. Since acquisition of basic English is a requirement for citizenship, the program also sponsored literacy programs for elderly, disabled Cambodian women and for non-literate Spanish speakers. For immigrants who could not afford to pay the naturalization application fee, the Northern California Citizenship Initiative contributed \$100,000 to a pool that would provide assistance to individuals.

Since its inception, Santa Clara County has received the Challenge Award from the California State Association of Counties for its work, and it continues to provide free citizenship days in 18 languages twice a year. The most recent Citizenship Day was offered in 19 languages in March 2006. The organizational committee continues to meet on a monthly basis and its efforts have managed to provide services to over 100,000 residents.

approximately 425,000 undocumented individuals in Illinois to gain legal status and eventual citizenship.

Recommendation: Expand the New Americans Initiative to promote the path toward U.S. citizenship for eligible legal immigrants.

As with other states that serve as a port-

of-entry for immigrants, Illinois has a large number of legal immigrants who are eligible to become U.S. citizens. In 2005, Illinois took the national lead in assisting legal permanent residents to become citizens by partnering with ICIRR to launch the New Americans Initiative (NAI). NAI is a three-year pilot project to promote citizenship by providing support to community-based organizations (CBOs) that offer immigrants application assistance, English and citizenship classes, legal counseling, and civic engagement opportunities. This initiative leverages the trust that CBOs, such as ethnic associations, social service agencies, faith-based institutions, and community colleges, enjoy with their constituents. One key component of the NAI is using media and outreach to ensure that LPRs know where to find application assistance.

Since its inception in 2005, NAI has succeeded in assisting 13,317 foreign-born residents to apply for citizenship.⁷⁴ With the continuing increase of immigrants to Illinois – and especially into the suburbs and downstate areas – NAI must be extended and expanded to reach the growing numbers of LPRs throughout the state. The number of eligible LPRs in Illinois rose from 342,000 in 2000 to over 404,000 by 2005. While many of these persons have become citizens, many more are becoming eligible everyday. The Council recommends that NAI be made a permanent part of the budget and expand into communities with emerging immigrant populations to support CBOs in un-served and underserved communities around the state or by creating a mobile team to visit those areas. Expanding NAI, especially to communities with new and growing immigrant populations, would enable more of the 404,000 currently eligible immigrants to become U.S. citizens.⁷⁵

C. Employment training and credentialing programs that meet the needs of local employers will allow Illinois to maintain and expand its role in the global economy and fill key jobs throughout the state.

Immigrants bring many assets to the workplace, including language and job skills, training, education, and energy. Immigrants now fuel the state's prosperity by supplying much-needed workers in both low- and high-skilled positions throughout our economy. In 2005, over 25 percent of immigrant workers had a high school diploma or less, while more than 27 percent of immigrant workers had a doctorate. Throughout much of the 20th

century, immigrants were able to advance their careers through entrepreneurship, manufacturing jobs, or a college education. More recent shifts in the labor market, towards a concentration of jobs among the lowest and highest skill levels, means that many of the jobs immigrants hold are not paths to upward mobility, as they once were.

Over the past five years, the number of native-born workers in Illinois rapidly declined and immigrant workers played an integral role in our replacement workforce.⁷⁷ Illinois' labor force grew by about three percent in the last five years as 194,000 new immigrant workers offset the decline of 36,000 native born workers.

Immigrant labor can effectively respond to the lack of qualified bilingual and culturally sensitive staff around the state by working in service areas such as health care and social work. By hiring multilingual employees, supporting their training, and increasing dual-language and cultural competence programs, the people of Illinois will benefit from each other's assets as they exchange resources, knowledge, and skills. Given the enormous local and global benefits Illinois could reap from the language skills and cultural knowledge of immigrants, the market should once again capitalize on the skills of its newcomers. Immigrants are vital to the economic growth of Illinois – we should develop strategies to ensure they become productive participants in our economy. To most effectively use the resources that immigrants bring to Illinois, it is necessary to understand that the skills and needs of highly educated and trained immigrants differ widely from those of immigrants with low levels of education. To address both ends of the workforce hourglass, the Policy Council offers recommendations for both groups.

1. At the top of the hourglass, highly educated immigrants are in demand but do not have an accessible path to meet re-credentialing requirements.

Across the United States, there are serious shortages of native-born workers for high skilled and professional positions. For instance, 30 percent of physicians in the Chicago metropolitan area are foreign-born because the medical school pipelines in the U.S. do not produce enough doctors.⁷⁹ The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2012, the United States could be short at least one million nurses. Illinois has a current nursing shortage of 7 percent (vacancies vs. jobs filled) with projected need of about 8,000 registered nurses and 1,200 licensed practical nurses per year through 2010.

Limited Health Care Access in Illinois related to Jobs

Despite forward-thinking programs such as KidCare and AllKids, there are large numbers of immigrant families without health insurance in Illinois. For example, the Gilead Center reports that 55.8 percent of foreign-born Latinos in Illinois are uninsured.⁷⁸ Two of the main reasons for lack of insurance are that many people work in low wage employment or are small business owners. Many of the health problems that disproportionately affect immigrant populations are preventable with screening and treatment. The best and most cost effective way to provide services to the large uninsured population is through preventative and primary care.

While the Policy Council does not make any specific recommendation regarding access to health care, we recognize that any solution for this health care problem would have a strong impact on a substantial number of people. Avenues that should be examined are employer-based insurance coverage, small business insurance pools and union contracts.

Unlike the largely unskilled immigrants who arrived at the turn of the 20th century, 42 percent of immigrants now enter the United States with financial capital and 12 or more years of formal education.⁸⁰ Despite their foreign education, experience, and professional credentials, however, a large proportion of immigrants experience occupational downgrading, forcing them to work in jobs that require lower skills than the jobs they held abroad. One study found that more than three-quarters of the highest skilled immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean experienced downward occupational mobility after arriving in the United States.⁸¹ Disadvantages stem from lack of language proficiency and difficulties in transferring skills to the American labor market.⁸² For immigrants with greater than 12 years of education, English fluency is associated with an astounding 76 percent jump in earnings.⁸³

Immigrants arriving in Illinois with high levels of education can fill these labor shortages and additionally offer the linguistic skills and cultural understanding needed in service professions such as health care, social work, and teaching. Similarly, facilitating the transfer of accounting and



engineering credentials would permit their quick incorporation into our global business community.

Many skilled immigrants need to update their skills, become certified, re-certified, and/or gain state licensure and credentials in order to work in their respective fields.⁸⁴ Thus, despite the number of skilled immigrants living in Illinois, businesses in the state still import skilled labor because of these barriers. In 2004 alone, Illinois received 18,765 non-immigrant temporary workers and trainees to fill these gaps.⁸⁵

Recommendation: Assist highly-educated and high-skilled immigrants to transfer their foreign professional credentials, education, and training to meet Illinois's professional requirements, allowing them to practice their vocations and contribute to the state economy.

Illinois should tackle these barriers head on. The State should invest in its immigrants by seeding programs that will provide them with the training necessary to update their skills and gain certification and licensure in the State of Illinois. Immigrants who come to the United States with training should receive credentialing assistance to maximize their economic potential in the Illinois labor market. Programs such as the Chicago Bilingual Nurse Consortium and the University of Illinois – Chicago's Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy Center provide examples of model programs in this area. Both programs focus on assisting health care professionals in re-entering their professions, leveraging the talents of trained professionals to serve the needs of the people of Illinois.

In year one, the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) should develop a system for compiling information on the existing credentials of immigrants. The information should be gathered at community locations, such as public schools, community colleges, CBOs, Outreach and Interpretation projects, and community welcoming centers. In addition, current re-credentialing programs in Illinois and other states should be identified and assessed to determine standards. Finally, a resource and referral list should be compiled to provide immigrant professionals with a place to start in the employment market.

Year two of the initiative should focus on using the inventory of immigrant assets to target specific professions for a pilot re-credentialing program. The Office of New Americans should work with the Illinois

Best Practice: Chicago Bilingual Nurse Consortium

The Chicago Bilingual Nurse Consortium (CBNC) supports internationally educated nurses (IENs) in the Chicago area. These nurses represent an underutilized resource for culturally and linguistically competent nursing care at a time when nurses are in short supply. Yet their professional skills are untapped because of language barriers and national and state regulatory system requirements.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2012, the United States could be short at least one million nurses. Illinois has a current nursing shortage of 7 percent (vacancies vs. jobs filled) with projected need of about 8,000 registered nurses and 1,200 licensed practical nurses per year through 2010. The supply of potential caregivers, including nurses, is projected to decrease 4.2 percent, and the number of those who need care is projected to increase by 31 percent between 2000 and 2020. (State of Illinois Governor's Office, 2005).

CBNC is the only centralized resource in Illinois – and one of the few in the U.S. – that offers programs and services to enable IENs to adapt to U.S. health care systems and culture and to help them prepare for the registered nurse (RN)

licensure examination. In the past four years, CBNC has worked with nurses from at least sixteen countries, the majority of whom are from Mexico, Central and South America. CBNC has advised over 200 IENs and offered educational programs to update nursing practice for 51 IEN candidates. Nineteen of the candidates who completed all or parts of the programs are now practicing RNs in Chicago, with pass rate of 83 percent (compared with the normal pass rate of less than 50 percent).

Over the next three years, CBNC seeks to establish a Comprehensive Service Center and expand current services and programs to provide information, advocacy, support services and education. CBNC will focus on Hispanic nurses due to the large growing Hispanic population in Chicago and the low representation of Hispanic nurses in our health care workforce: Hispanic nurses comprise only 2 percent of the total U.S. nursing population and have the lowest representation of any minority group in nursing. It will also continue to coordinate efforts among professional organizations, governmental offices and health care agencies to address the barriers and challenges these RNs face as they seek to enter the health care workforce.

Best Practice: Welcome Back⁸⁶

Welcome Back, begun in 2001, is an initiative sponsored by community colleges and state universities that links foreign-trained health professionals to health career opportunities in the United States.⁸⁷ Through the services of Welcome Back Centers, which currently operate in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Boston, immigrant health professionals find their way back into the health sector, thus contributing to the alleviation of the critical need for bilingual and culturally diverse health professionals.

Welcome Back has served approximately 6,500 immigrants, half of whom came for advice to understand the credentialing or licensing process, the other half of whom are currently engaged in more intensive services. Welcome Back Centers help immigrants create professional plans and offer linkages to

external educational programs. They also sponsor some educational programs, such as one year accelerated ESL courses for health professionals, which focus on English speaking skills specifically needed in the health sector, or courses on the US health care system. Welcome Back also cooperates with state licensing boards and professional associations in order to facilitate entry into certain health professions and expedite review processes. The San Francisco Welcome Back Center is the lead site of the initiative and is currently discussing replication opportunities with organizations in three other US cities. It also provides technical assistance to localities that wish to use its model. While original funding came from The California Endowment, each site also maintains other funding sources, including government and industry partners, such as Kaiser Permanente and Sharp HealthCare (San Diego, CA).

Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to develop a re-credentialing program that includes education, clinical/field experience, and provides social support. The Council suggests developing relationships with professionals associations in each field for outreach and networking.

2. At the other end of the hourglass, immigrants in low-level jobs need a foothold in expanding industries that could lead to upward social and economic mobility.

The manufacturing jobs that had traditionally provided economic mobility to an earlier generation of immigrants with low levels of education and training are no longer widely available. Today, immigrants without a college education or technical skills are most likely to find low-paying, low mobility, service jobs. Currently, immigrants comprise 37 percent of building maintenance workers; 27 percent of food preparation workers; and 22 percent of farming, fishing, and forestry workers.⁸⁸ The University of Notre Dame's *State of Latino Chicago* report notes that one-third of all foreign-born Latinos in the Chicago metropolitan area between the ages of 25 and 34 have completed no more than nine years of schooling and nearly 60 percent has not completed high school.⁸⁹

While these jobs offer good entry-level opportunities and are a key starting point for many new immigrants, opportunities to move beyond them, to earn a living wage, and to move into sectors with projected job growth are limited. One major barrier to upward mobility is that immigrants with low levels of education are also the least likely to speak English well. Increasingly, entry-level jobs that pay more than subsistence wages and offer opportunities for career advancement require at least some training beyond high school.⁹⁰ A fluent English-speaking immigrant earns nearly double that of a non-English speaking worker.⁹¹ The well-established relationship between English language proficiency and wages indicates that ESL and job training should be combined and offered simultaneously.⁹²

Recommendation: Assist low-skilled immigrants to access a practical career ladder by tying English instruction and vocational training to advancement within specific industries such as restaurants, hotels, tourism, and health care.

The State of Illinois can play an active role in assisting immigrants to develop their full potential and maximize their human capital, benefiting the state economy. The

Best Practice: Instituto del Progreso Latino “Carreras En Salud” program

The health care industry is facing a shortage of nurses that ultimately affects the quality of care for all Chicagoans. Meanwhile Mexican-Americans, often employed in other low-wage sectors such as food service and retail, are eager to enter nursing.

In the Chicago area, the health care industry's need for bilingual health care professionals is acute. Latinos comprise less than 1 percent of all Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). And while Latino residents are trained and employed as Certified Nurses Assistants (CNA), very few make it through demanding LPN programs largely due to language and advanced math skill demands.

The *Carreras en Salud* (Careers in Health) program is a partnership between Instituto del Progreso Latino and Wright College's Humboldt Park Vocational Educational Center. Founded almost 30 years ago by Mexican immigrant workers in the Pilsen community, Instituto del Progreso Latino has developed into the leading workforce development organization serving the Mexican community of Chicagoland.

Carreras en Salud addresses both the skills development gaps for Latinos in high-growth sectors as well as the

health care industry demand for bilingual health care professionals. The partnership provides Spanish-speaking job seekers and incumbent health workers with education and multiple points of entry, and employment in an employer recognized career ladder. Employer partners include hospitals such as Mercy Hospital and Medical Center, community health centers like Erie Family Health Center and associations such as the Metropolitan Health Care Council and Hispanic Nurses Association.

Instituto provides pre-college readiness through contextualized, career path oriented vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) courses and a customized 16 week preparation course in language and math contextualized within the medical field (physiology, anatomy, and psychology) that prepares students for successful entrance into the Licensed Practical Nurses program at Humboldt Park Vocational Center. Wright College is Illinois's top-ranked LPN program, with a 100 percent passage of the licensure exam for the last five years. The college has a waiting list of 500 students for its rigorous LPN program. With encouragement, family support and financial assistance, in just three years a person with a sixth grade English capability can become an LPN earning \$18 to \$24 per hour.

Policy Council recommends that Illinois develop bilingual career path programs where students become proficient in English as they learn a trade that meets the needs of local employers and connects to their employment goals. Such programs should be designed in collaboration with industry representatives, community colleges, and CBOs. Research shows that successful models often provide support services, such as child care, financial aid, placement and follow-up.⁹³ The Policy Council has designed a comprehensive strategy for developing the skills of immigrants as productive members of our economy, addressing both current and future needs through pilot programs and permanent initiatives.

To plan for future needs, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Department of Higher Education (IDHE) should work with state universities and community colleges to develop a 10-year plan to address training for bilingual workers, especially in state agencies. The plan could include training state employees in a second language using occupational language training

materials and programs specifically made for the workplace; implementing second language requirements and incentives, such as scholarships, for college curricula in areas such as public administration, health administration, and social work programs; and financing internships in state agencies for younger bilingual students and older immigrants with English and native language competency.

To address current needs, the Policy Council suggests three paths: first, the We Want to Learn English initiative (see recommendation 1) should provide funds to programs that offer English classes tied to employment skills and upward mobility, collaborating with CBOs and community colleges at workplaces. Second, the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI), a partnership between the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), ICCB, Women Employed, the Joyce Foundation, and the Chicago Jobs Council that seeks to meet the needs of Illinois's employers while ensuring that workers gain access to jobs leading to long-term economic self-sufficiency, should be



encouraged to include a vocational English component in their programs.⁹⁴ DCEO has already committed \$500,000 and the Joyce Foundation will contribute \$1 million. As a third step, DCEO should add another \$500,000, focused on funding additional pilot programs for bilingual career path development tied into the existing educational structure of ICCB and DECO. ●

Best Practice: Power-One Project: Boston Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services

In 2001, the Boston Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) received federal funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide ESL and job assistance to 280 of the 379 laid-off workers from Power-One in Allston, Massachusetts. Ninety-seven percent of Power-One Project's participants were Chinese-American immigrant workers, 80 percent of whom were female.

One of the main objectives of the project—which cost an average of \$6,609 per person—was to provide LEP workers with very low skills and little knowledge of English a sustainable career development path instead of temporary short-term employment. After receiving advice and being assessed by career counselors in one of the three career centers in Boston, workers were assigned to various training vendors who would, in turn, place workers in vocational English classes according to language level. Vendors were very flexible with regard to class content and adjusting to the needs of LEP individuals with very low levels of English proficiency.

JCS staff members gathered information on the local economy to advise LEP individuals about job market trends. As the manufacturing sector was on the decline, JCS encouraged workers to acquire new skills and develop a new career path. Two of the most promising and popular sectors were the hotel and culinary art industries.

The project's model was heavily dependent on relationships with community-based partners. The city government of Boston contracted with community ESL providers—Asian American Civic Association (AACA), International Institute of Boston (IIB), Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) and YMCA's International Center (YMCA)—to integrate English language classes with vocational training. The JCS also formed a partnership with the Chinese Progressive Action (CPA), a local immigrant advocacy group. The CPA played a major role in informing immigrants about the program and their career options and often served as interpreters and liaisons between the workers and the city government.

Three years after these Chinese workers were laid-off, 65 percent of them had been reemployed and were earning, on average, 8 percent more than what they had earned at Power-One.

Focus on Children

Challenge 2

Illinois should maximize the potential of children of immigrants through strategic education initiatives.

A. Parent involvement in the education of their children provides proven benefits for the whole family.

Illinois has undertaken several initiatives to advance immigrant integration and benefit families by ensuring that immigrant children can access programs and services they need. The AllKids program, proposed by Governor Blagojevich and enacted by the General Assembly in 2005, provides health insurance coverage for all children in Illinois, regardless of their immigration status.⁹⁵ The Policy Council supports AllKids and urges aggressive marketing to reach all children in Illinois through local schools, CBOs, and community colleges. Governor Blagojevich also recently secured \$45 million of funding for a universal preschool program that will give all Illinois children a solid foundation for kindergarten, including children from immigrant families. The following recommendations build on these already significant measures.

Much like their parents, children of immigrants are valuable assets for Illinois, and a good education is essential to unlocking their true potential. Quality education allows children to master the English language, which in turn opens doors to educational advancement, upward mobility, and opportunities for leadership in their communities. Providing solid and appropriate education to the children of immigrants is crucial to maintaining and expanding Illinois' role in the global economy.

Children who grow up in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken and are limited English proficient (LEP) show wide gaps in school achievement compared to other youth.⁹⁶ The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), found that English language learner (ELL) students in the fourth and eighth grades of Illinois public schools attained lower achievement levels in standardized reading and mathematics tests than their non-ELL counterparts. One reason for this outcome is that many immigrants come to the United States with limited formal education and from countries where parental involvement in schooling is uncommon. Parents who have limited English proficiency, in particular, are less likely than parents who are fluent in English to participate in school activities and locate resources to help their children succeed.⁹⁷ By teaching immigrant families about the United States educational system and encouraging foreign-born parents to take an active role in their child's development and education, Illinois can significantly enhance the educational success of its children.

Effective early childhood programs that engage students and their parents have proven to have highly positive impacts for both groups.⁹⁸ Immigrant parents who are involved in schools are more likely to become civically engaged at the local community level, develop

Best practice: Polk Brothers Foundation Full Service Schools Initiative

Chicago's Polk Brothers Foundation piloted a Full Service Schools Initiative (FSSI) at three Chicago public elementary schools in 1996. FSSI funded partnerships between each school and a local social service agency to coordinate and improve the delivery of social services and engage parents in school life. Funded programs included adult education and ESL classes, technology training, and health services. A 2002 evaluation of FSSI found that participating schools showed marked improvements in reading rates and other academic measures, as well as increased participation of teachers and parents in supportive student programs. The success of the FSSI pilot prompted the Foundation, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and other allies, to launch the Chicago Campaign to Expand Community Schools in 2002. In 2004, CPS formally endorsed the community schools model, which 55 Chicago schools have now adopted.⁹⁹

English language competency, and have better physical and psychological health, while their children are able to overcome academic challenges. Model programs around the country allow parents to volunteer at local schools and offer parenting, family literacy and ESL classes, health screening and referrals.

Recommendation: Encourage the development of early childhood education that assists children to learn English and other programs that involve parents and families in their children's learning.

The Policy Council recommends that the State make funding available for local community partnerships that focus on the involvement of immigrant parents at the pre- and grade school levels. The State should provide funding for at least five local community partnerships, to either develop pilot programs or expand existing programs at the pre-school level. In addition, the State's Preschool for All initiative should include a strong English component to lay a solid foundation for future educational success.

As Preschool for All is being developed, the Policy Council urges that the immigrant community be part of the planning process and that programs be developed to meet

the particular needs of local communities. In 2000, there were 353,342 children aged three and four in Illinois. Of the 95.3 percent who live with a parent (336,860), 22.8 percent were immigrants or children of immigrants.¹⁰¹ Therefore, approximately 25 percent of the \$45 million for Preschool for All should address the needs of immigrant families. Strategies should include designing programs that fit the varying language skills and cultural needs of local families and conducting outreach and evaluation to ensure that immigrant children are enrolled and benefiting from the preschool experience.

The Early Learning Council and the State should strive to distribute funds and add preschool slots proportionate to where the 3 and 4-year old population in Illinois lives. Planners should keep in mind that many communities do not have the necessary facilities to serve the children in the neighborhood and many schools are already overcrowded.

The State should encourage the development of proven programs such as parent-mentor programs, dual language instruction, and multilingual teaching staff beginning in preschool. Schools should also be used as community centers, where families have the opportunity to participate in family literacy programs and classes that teach parents how to maneuver through the American educational system and its laws. To offer the greatest promise, these programs should involve partnerships between local schools, CBOs, and the State. Such partnerships would leverage limited community resources by engaging partners at accessible settings, such as schools and community institutions.

B. Multilingualism is a skill that will give children—and Illinois—a strong advantage in the global economy.

In addition to learning English and succeeding academically, Illinois should encourage the children of immigrants to retain their parents' language. While many children of immigrants are able to communicate in languages other than English, they often do not develop sufficient fluency and literacy to leverage their language skills in the labor force. Given the economic importance of Illinois' growing business relationships with China, India, Korea, and Latin America, it is foolish to lose the linguistic assets of children of who speak languages such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Urdu, Hindi, Korean, and Spanish. Although the decision to implement dual language instruction must be made by local school boards, the

Best practice: Logan Square Neighborhood Association

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) serves a largely Latino neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side. Most parents are first generation immigrants from Mexico, with some from other Spanish speaking areas.

LSNA has worked with its local schools to implement a community schools model. One key element of this model is parent mentor programs, which LSNA now runs in nine schools. Through these programs, about 120 parents, mostly immigrant mothers, assist teachers for two hours per day in classrooms. Most of the approximately 1,000 parents who have graduated from this program during the past decade have gone on to further schooling or jobs. Their presence in the school has transformed the school climate and built bridges to other families. The mentors themselves are personally transformed, become active participants in public life, return to school, learn English, and get jobs. The parent mentors also serve as role models for the children, assisting those who fall behind.

LSNA, in partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago and other non-profit agencies, also runs after-school and evening community centers in six schools. These centers provide ESL and GED classes for adults, along with child care, tutoring, culture, and recreation activities for their children. Over 700 families study in the centers each week, where parents and other community residents work as teachers, security guards, and child care providers. The centers also provide a site for community and school activities. Each center's programs are planned on the basis of community input collected through door-to-door surveys and a community board.

Through these programs, local schools have become welcoming places for fostering educational attainment for the whole family and serving family needs. In the past seven years test scores in LSNA schools have more than doubled. Thousands of adults have studied ESL in LSNA centers and over 100 adults yearly obtain their GED. As such, LSNA programs offer a useful model that other schools and communities can follow as they address the needs of immigrant families.¹⁰⁰



State should encourage the development of programs that allow children to develop their linguistic skills and share their knowledge with other children.

Recommendation: Fund dual-language pilot programs to encourage children of immigrants to retain their parents' languages and develop fluency in non-English languages for other children.

Of the various types of programs that fall under the umbrella of “dual language,” the Policy Council recommends the implementation of two-way immersion programs. These programs provide instruction in two languages, allowing children to develop cognitively in their native language while building fluency in a second. The aim is multilingualism and multiculturalism for all students—immigrant and non-immigrant. Because cognitive, academic, and linguistic benefits fully appear after five or six years into the program, it is recommended that children begin dual immersion programs no later than first grade.

The preferred method of implementing dual language programs is to begin with two kindergarten classrooms per school, each including 30 children. Two classrooms with a total of 60 children works best because of attrition related issues. Schools with enough families interested in the program may recruit students only from their school, while other schools may choose to involve students from a number of schools, all participating in the program at one location. Kindergarten is a prime time to begin dual language instruction because young children are able to more easily learn and retain two languages and because the opportunity to learn the languages commences prior to receiving instruction in substantive classes.

The cost of dual language programs is essentially the same as a traditional classroom – the cost of teaching staff, continuing education, training, and materials. The teacher in a dual language classroom must speak, read, and write both of the target languages. Materials to supply this classroom would be similar to that of a general education classroom, but would be needed in both languages. School districts would provide staff development training for dual language teachers, but this requirement is similar to the training provided to all teachers.

The Policy Council recommends that the State encourage local school districts to implement dual language programs by providing funding for five pilot programs around the state, each offering two



Best Practice: Schaumburg School District 54

Currently over 500 students are enrolled in Schaumburg School District 54 Spanish-English and Japanese-English Dual Language Programs, offered in four elementary schools and one junior high school. The program is a two-way immersion program with half of the students in each class beginning as native English speakers and half as native speakers of Japanese or Spanish. The program goals include high levels of academic achievement and the development of bilingualism, biliteracy and multicultural competency for all students in the programs.

Dual Language Programs began at one elementary school in School District 54 in 1994 as part of a three-year Title VII federal grant, and expanded to another school in 2000 under a second grant. At the end of each three-year grant period, the SD54 Board of Education continued to support the programs' growth with non-English materials and staffing. It was

this commitment that assured program expansion not only through all grade levels but also into additional schools. As new schools in the district have looked into starting Dual Language programs, each has gone through a process of surveying their communities for interest and building support through research and information-sharing meetings. The success of the program has depended on the ability of the school to access and attract participants from both target language populations. The continued growth of the dual language program is due in part to the investment in high-quality teachers, curricula, and staff development particular to a Dual Language program. A determination to hold to the instructional use of both languages is essential to the long-term goals of high academic achievement, bilingualism and bi-literacy for all students in the program.

Barbara Wojtysiak, Director of Bilingual and Multicultural Programs, Schaumburg School District 54

classrooms per grade. To support their successful implementation, the State should promote dual language training programs, such as those offered through the Illinois Resource Center.

Since Spanish is a functional language in Illinois, most in-state dual language programs provide instruction in English and Spanish. However, depending on the needs of the local community, school districts should also provide programs in other languages widely spoken in the Chicago area, such as Polish, Arabic, Hindi, and Chinese. All programs that foster multilingual skills, including after-school programs offered by immigrant community organizations in their respective primary languages, will allow Illinois to maintain its competitive edge in the global economy. ●

Focus on Government

Challenge 3

State agencies and contractors of Illinois must be able to effectively and consistently communicate with the state's immigrant residents by providing linguistically appropriate service and by understanding the cultural differences within the population of Illinois.

The State must develop ways to effectively communicate with new arrivals and limited English speakers to help them integrate into their communities and to capitalize on their skills. In 2005, over 1.1 million individuals with limited English proficiency lived in Illinois.¹⁰² Approximately 96.5 percent of them lived in the Chicago metropolitan area and 40 percent of them lived in the city of Chicago.¹⁰³ The number of individuals with limited English proficiency has doubled over the last decade in counties outside the Chicago metropolitan area and continues to grow at a high rate.¹⁰⁴ The Policy Council recognizes the need for state agencies to reach out to residents who are not able to access services in English, at the same time as the State launches the “We Want to Learn English” initiative to enhance proficiency.

Recommendation: Each state agency should develop a language access and hiring work plan to ensure that immigrants are able to meaningfully access state services.

Each state agency should assess its current capacity to address the language and cultural needs of its immigrant constituents and develop a plan and a timeline for implementation. Agency plans should incorporate multilingual workforce development, interpretation and translation services, consistent data collection and analysis methods, and cultural competence training. In developing their plans, state agencies should collaborate with CBOs to determine creative solutions for specific community needs. Each agency should look for “best practices” among state contractors and assist other contractors to achieve these results. Agency plans should be filed with the Office of New Americans, which would be responsible for monitoring their implementation, issuing public statements on the state government's website regarding these plans, and sharing the most effective best practices from a wide range of sources. ●

Best practice: Illinois Department of Human Services LEP Initiative

Establishing government structures to serve Illinois's growing immigrant population presents unique challenges. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) – with its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) initiative – seeks to re-engineer its service infrastructure in order to meet these challenges head on. Led by Assistant Secretary Grace Hou and working in close coordination with the Governor's Office of New Americans and Policy, IDHS has worked closely with external stakeholders and internal staff to draft and implement a plan for change.

Many of these changes have already taken hold. IDHS has begun to collect data on LEP clients served. Every DHS advisory panel or council now has at least one

immigrant leader. All department funding requests now require applicants to state their skills and experience providing services to immigrant clients. Every IDHS facility will develop its own customer service plan, which explains procedures and policy to serve LEP clients.

IDHS has also completed a revision of its bilingual test. This test, used to measure the language facility of staff seeking bilingual pay, now more accurately assesses the language skills of IDHS staff. Finally, IDHS recently revised and clarified its policy for providing bilingual pay to its employees, helping to ensure that immigrant clients will receive services from someone proficient in their language. These changes, combined with planned future improvements, will improve accessibility and quality of care for immigrants as they journey toward integration.

Best practice: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services¹⁰⁵

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), currently Washington's largest state agency, started its language interpreter and translation services in 1991 after losing a class action law suit in 1983 related to the adequacy of its services to the LEP population. Currently, 90 percent of translation work is conducted by contractors while the remaining 10 percent is done by state employees. DSHS receives \$4 million of state and federal funding a year to offer its linguistic services, and spends \$1.4 million on translation services, \$1.6 million on in-person spoken language interpreter services, \$1.1 million on over-the-phone spoken language interpreter services, \$50,000 for American Sign Language interpreter services, and \$550,000 on bilingual employee incentive pay.

DSHS has a simultaneous release policy, which requires the department to simultaneously issue applications or other official documents in eight languages (Cambodian, Mandarin, Laotian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean, Russian, and Somali) in addition to English. In addition, applications for food assistance or medical programs have introductory remarks inviting individuals to receive the application or assistance in a foreign language.

For one-on-one communication with LEP clients, DSHS field offices have access to call centers in all 8 recognized interpretation languages. The majority of the DSHS

staff members are also Spanish-speaking, particularly in offices in the eastern part of the state where many agricultural immigrants work. All field offices are staffed with an LEP coordinator who relays information back to DSHS headquarters in Olympia. If an individual requires translation in a language that is not offered by DSHS staff, a request can be made to the headquarters, which in turn places a translation request to one of three contractors. The individual will receive translated information in one to five business days.

The Department of Social and Health Services, with the help of its contractors, is able to offer services in 90 languages, of which some 45 have been requested. DSHS receives anywhere between 100 to 1,500 requests for translated documents a day, averaging 4,000 requests per month.

To encourage linguistic access, bilingual staff members within DSHS receive a 5 percent increase in their salary if they utilize a language other than English in their job. DSHS maintains testing and certifying schemes in eight languages for both staff translators and interpreters to ensure quality control. Tests are divided into various categories such as clerical, financial, social, child support enforcement, vocational rehabilitation, and community in order to match them with the individual's expertise; they are offered once or twice a month and 70 percent of the candidates have become certified. DSHS seeks contractors that can also provide similar levels of quality assurance for their translators and interpreters.



Best Practice: Equal Access Project, Oakland CA¹⁰⁶

On May 8, 2001, the City of Oakland passed The Equal Access to Services Ordinance (EAO).¹⁰⁷ To comply with the EAO, the city established the City Manager's Equal Access Office. The two main objectives of the Equal Access Office are 1) to translate materials and provide interpretation services and 2) to recommend to city agencies the number of bilingual staff needed in public contact areas.

Currently, contractors translate all documents, but the long-term goal of the office is to establish an in-house translation service. The office currently pays its local contractor 26 cents per word in Spanish and 32 cents per word in any Asian language. Annual costs amount to approximately \$230,000, but the director estimates that this cost could be reduced if the office developed its own service. Every document is proofread by four native speaking individuals (two from the Equal Access Office and two from the outsourced vendor) before it is published.

The Equal Access Office ensures that all city departments provide bilingual Chinese- or Spanish-speaking staff members to serve the LEP community. It also emphasizes communicating with LEP individuals not only in their native language, but also at their level of literacy in that language. LEP individuals who speak other languages are able to receive simultaneous translation service. Simultaneous translations cost approximately \$150-\$175 per hour with a minimum of two hours and are very costly. Agreements have been established between the Equal Access Office and among various high school and colleges and the University of Berkeley, from which international students serve as volunteer interpreters for the LEP community.

The office has researched effective communication methods to disseminate information to the LEP community—the Chinese in Oakland receive most of their information on the 7 o'clock news on a local Chinese television station; the Vietnamese read the weekly Mo

Magazine; and the Spanish speakers obtain information on two local Spanish-speaking television newscasts at 6pm and 10pm. The office also sponsors a booth during the August street festival in Chinatown and the November Day of the Dead festivities in the Hispanic sector to provide information to LEP seniors and families about its services.

The city also maintains City Line, a 24/7 multilingual telephonic system. The system is a voice bank with over 500 recorded messages available in five languages; it informs citizens of useful information about issues such as adopting animals, what to do with construction debris, or tax payments. If an answer is unavailable, individuals can leave messages in the system and a staff member will return the call.

Bilingual city employees receive incentive pay ranging from \$75 to \$95 a month. However, since many of them were self-assessed, the Equal Access Office implemented a cost-effective online foreign language test that measures whether an individual can speak and write at a second-grade level—the level at which oral interpretations are deemed most effective for communicating with the LEP population within public contact areas. Half of the 250 bilingual workers in Oakland have taken the test. For written translation purposes, the level of certification must be through American Translator Association (ATA) certified staff based on the Ordinance's requirement.

There have been some challenges in implementing the EAO. Since it is not legally required, not all agencies have allocated a budget for interpretation services. In addition, the Equal Access to Services Ordinance requires that Equal Access staff be American Translator Association (ATA) certified, but only four ATA certified translators that speak Chinese-Mandarin live in the Bay Area. The office's Chinese constituency base, in its majority, speaks Cantonese. The office is hoping to modify the ordinance by allowing the office to first hire and then provide translators with appropriate training.

Focus on Communities

Challenge 4

Effective partnerships at the local level must be developed to communicate and involve newcomers in the English, citizenship, job training, and early childhood programs mentioned above, as well as other initiatives addressing health, education, job safety, and other areas of concern.

A. The most important vehicles for successful implementation of a strategic immigrant integration strategy in Illinois are faith-based institutions, community-based organizations, local schools, and community colleges.

The Policy Council believes that the most effective way to achieve the goals set out for Illinois is through partnerships that build on the strengths of immigrants and their local communities. The Policy Council calls on the State of Illinois to galvanize the energies of government, business, non-profits, unions, faith-based organizations, community colleges, local schools, philanthropy, and community organizations to develop working relationships that most productively utilize the respective strengths of each. Each sector should engage in what it does best, partner with members of other sectors when it is most efficient and effective to do so, and work in a coordinated fashion to build capacity. Pooling resources and partnering on innovative ideas will produce the best and broadest outcomes for all Illinois residents.

Partnerships with CBOs have proven to be the most effective and cost-efficient means of operating programs in immigrant communities. CBOs include a broad range of local level institutions, including neighborhood organizations, ethnic and faith-based institutions, and schools. These organizations have community support because of their capacity to communicate in multiple languages, understand diverse cultures, and inspire trust among families. In newly emerging immigrant communities, partnerships are especially crucial and should be combined with capacity-building support to allow community institutions, often unprepared to respond to the changes brought about by immigrants, to effectively reach immigrant families and foster immigrant leadership.

The State of Illinois has realized the value of these partnerships through multiple projects: the Refugee and Immigrant Citizenship Initiative—the first state-funded partnership to provide citizenship application services, ESL, civics, and U.S. history instruction through community-based and refugee resettlement organizations; the New Americans Initiative—a coordinated multi-year campaign for citizenship, administered by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), which directly links legal permanent residents to the information and services they need to successfully pursue citizenship; and the Outreach and Interpretation Project—a partnership between immigrant-serving agencies in the State of Illinois, ICIRR, and the Illinois Department of Human Services that supports immigrant access to public benefits by overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Recommendation: Strengthen partnerships with community organizations that work with immigrants, particularly in emerging immigrant communities, and help to build their capacity.

Partnerships between the State, community-based organizations, local schools, community colleges, businesses, unions, faith-based institutions, municipalities, and philanthropic organizations are a cost-effective means for providing information and services. These organizations are trusted as the point of information for many immigrants and a natural gathering point for community members. Illinois should create an integrated system for reaching adults and children through these organizations, working as a delivery system to assist local communities to implement models and best practices. There are four ways the State can meet this recommendation:

- **First**, the State should give special consideration in state grant-making to organizations that work in partnership with newly emerging immigrant communities. Implementing this recommendation would not cost the State more resources or staff because it would simply be adding a factor into the grant-making process.
- **Second**, state agencies should work in partnership with foundations to offer grants supporting projects that enhance the capacity of organizations serving emerging immigrant populations. The Fund for Immigrants & Refugees is an

example of such a partnership. Between 1997 and 2002, 27 funders, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the United Way in Chicago contributed \$6.8 million towards advancing the effectiveness of agencies serving immigrants; IDHS' share of this total was nearly \$2 million.

- **Third**, welcoming centers based in community organizations or those that work closely with CBO staff should be developed to connect immigrants to English, citizenship, and other initiatives provided by the State and local organizations. Centers could be housed in organizations throughout the state or, alternatively, could serve immigrant communities through a traveling unit, similar to the Mexican Consulate's Mobil Office. Ideally, the centers would be partnerships between local municipalities and existing or emerging community-based organizations, with funding from the State. The immigrant community should be involved in the planning process, to ensure that the services offered meet the needs of the local community. Priority should be given to opening these centers in suburban and rural locations, where there is now an influx of new immigrant residents.
- **Finally**, the Outreach and Interpretation (O&I) project should receive increased funding. The goal of O&I is to ensure that immigrant families and other limited English-speaking individuals in Illinois are able to thrive by reducing the barriers that low-income immigrants and their children face when seeking public benefits and services (nutritional, medical, housing, psychological, child care, employment) as well as the cash support they need for proper health, well-being and economic self-sufficiency. The project currently provides grants to 34 organizations around the state. Grantees provide interpretation and explanation of state services and assist immigrants in filling out and submitting applications. They also translate documents and provide outreach to the community to ensure that people are aware of the resources available to them.

O&I is an existing vehicle that can be used to promote capacity building in communities. Increased funding should first be directed at expanding the O&I project to areas in the suburbs and downstate where there are high concentrations of immigrants, such as Waukegan, Joliet, Aurora, Carbondale, DuPage County, and Metro East. Although the program operated in 52 languages

this year, there is still more need for other languages, such as Urdu and Farsi.

O&I could also build capacity by implementing a program in which community leaders are trained to do outreach in their communities. Community Health Partnership of Illinois and Alivio Medical Center currently run effective programs using this one-to-one outreach method and should be used as a model for the O&I project. Training organizations and community leaders for more effective outreach requires further funding for materials and staff time.

Recommendation: The State of Illinois, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Education should develop model templates for local immigrant integration and highlight best practices across the state to assist local communities effectively address challenges posed by their demographic changes.

The schools where children are educated and the community colleges immigrants turn to for English classes, job training, and adult education are the local government institutions with which immigrants have the most immediate contact. "Best practice templates" for partnerships with immigrant community based organizations that highlight the education of immigrant children, involvement of immigrant parents in their children's education, English instruction for children and adults, citizenship initiatives, and workforce development should be created by the Illinois State Community College Board and the Illinois State Board of Education with state support.

To meet this recommendation, community colleges and local boards of education, along with faith-based institutions and CBOs, should work as delivery systems to assist local communities in implementing models and best practices. ICCB, ISBE, and IBHE currently share best practices in publications and conferences but little is done to encourage others to adopt and expand them. Providing incentives to encourage the replication of best practices across the state would be a powerful tool. The Office of New Americans should find the means to share best practices and encourage their expansion. The Office of New Americans could choose three to five geographic areas on which to focus each year and set up site visits in each area for different groups of people, including mayors, school districts, employment training programs, CBOs, and the staff at welcoming centers.



Recommendation: The Governor’s Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy should be assigned an ongoing role as the monitoring agency for these strategic recommendations.

The Office of New Americans should be made permanent to maintain focus on the needs of the increasing number of immigrants in Illinois. The Office of New Americans will be needed to monitor and implement the recommendations developed under the New Americans Executive Order, as well as to address emerging issues. In alternate years, an outside evaluator should work with the Office to ensure that goals are met and to help determine solutions if barriers arise. ●

Conclusion

As the United States continues to grapple with immigration policy, Illinois is faced with the challenge of building a better future for all of our state’s residents, immigrants and native-born alike. Immigrants already play a vital role in our state’s economy. Our economy is tied to global markets and immigrants in both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs contribute to our competitiveness. Given this reality, Illinois needs to adopt proactive policies that will leverage the skills and assets of its immigrants and prepare future generations for their responsibilities in our collective prosperity.

Immigrants want what all Americans want – to pursue the American Dream of opportunity for their families, to contribute and participate fully in society, and to be treated fairly by government and public institutions. Assisting immigrants quickly integrate into their new communities will enable them sooner to make meaningful contributions and move from newcomers to neighbors in our communities.

This report marks the end of the first year of this landmark policy project, but is just the beginning of a new way to work with all of Illinois’s residents. By implementing the policies identified in this joint update and the companion reports, Illinois will lead the nation in a positive, strategic approach to assist immigrants to become our neighbors, for the benefit of all. ●

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Ngoan Le is Senior Program Officer at the Chicago Community Trust. Since coming to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam, Le has established herself as a major figure in the state's newcomer leadership. She has previously served as Executive Director of the Vietnamese Association of Illinois, as Special Assistant to Governor James R. Thompson for Asian American Affairs, as Senior Manager for various programs within the Illinois Department of Public Aid and Human Services, as Managing Deputy Commissioner/Chief Program Officer of the Chicago Department of Human Services, and most recently as Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's Special Assistant on Homelessness. Le also served on President Clinton's Advisory Commission for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Juan Salgado is Executive Director of Instituto del Progreso Latino, a leading education and training institution serving Chicago's southwest side neighborhoods. The son of Mexican immigrants and a former community organizer, Salgado brings a strong commitment to providing immigrants with the education and skills development they need to become full participants in the economic and political system. Salgado is the current Board President of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. He holds a Masters degree in Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Bachelors degree in Economics from Illinois Wesleyan University. He was a 2005 fellow in the distinguished Leadership Greater Chicago program for emerging leaders of business, government, other professions, and non-profit corporations. He was also recently elected to a three year term where he will advise the President of Mexico through the Institute for Mexicans Abroad.

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Endnotes

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